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[GERALDINE AND LADY ROSENBOURY LEAVING WALTER'S STUDIO.]

THE BELLE OF THE SEASON.

BY W. E. CHADWICK.

CHAPTER IX.

Rise from thy scorning den, thou soul of mischief!
My blood boils hotter than the poisoned flesh.
Of Hercules clothed in the Centaur's shirt.
Swell me, courage!

Racine's Rebellion.

It was the morning after the ball.

The Lady Geraldine Summers was seated in a pretty morning room at her uncle's residence. If she had been dazzlingly beautiful the evening previous, she was not less lovely now. There was not a trace of fatigue or sleeplessness upon her bright young face, nor a particle of lassitude or languor in her manner. Her dusky hair was smoothed away from her brows in such a way as to fully reveal the lovely contour of her features, and a single curl strayed over her shoulder.

She was dressed in a morning robe of white, confined at the waist by a scarlet sash, which floated behind her, nearly reaching the floor when she stood erect.

As she sat there, with folded hands, she seemed absorbed in thought. The expression of her countenance kept constantly changing. Sometimes she smiled, but the smile faded into a look of sadness; to be succeeded by another curving of her delicate mouth.

Evidently, she was reviewing the events of the previous evening.

In the midst of her reverie the door opened, and Lord Rosenbury was announced.

The Lady Geraldine arose to receive him.

Rosenbury bowed low over the little hand extended to him, and it may have been that he favoured it with a gentle pressure, for there was a flush on the maiden's cheeks as she withdrew it from his grasp.

"May I hope that the Lady Geraldine missed me from her brilliant assembly last evening?" he asked,

as she resumed her seat, and he took a chair near her.

"My uncle was much disappointed in not seeing Lord Rosenbury," returned the Lady Geraldine, evasively. "You were detained by domestic afflictions?"

"Not exactly," replied Rosenbury, twirling his whiskers absently. "My nurse died the other day, and was buried yesterday—only my nurse, you know. I remained at Rosenbury to attend the funeral, which took place yesterday, and also to comfort her bereaved son."

"That son is Mr. Loraine, the painter, is he not?"

"Yes—poor fellow! He is quite alone now, but he has a friend in me."

"He has had a sad loss," remarked the maiden. "Has it proved a great blow to him?"

"I believe so," was the reply. "But he is already beginning to recover from it. You are very kind to inquire after him. Among all my humble friends there is not one whom I like so well as Walter Loraine, the son of my old nurse."

Rosenbury's last sentence was rather offensive to Lady Geraldine, but the tone in which it was uttered grated still more upon her hearing. Her cheek was slightly flushed as she responded:

"And among all my equals, Lord Rosenbury, there is not one I esteem and respect more than Mr. Loraine, the distinguished artist!"

Rosenbury bit his lips as was his habit when annoyed, but he concealed his chagrin by a smile, and said:

"You are very kind to Walter, Lady Geraldine, and as his friend I thank you for your able championship of his cause. Does the earl share your sentiments towards Mr. Loraine?"

"Really, my lord, I do not know. We have never conversed about him."

There was a slight hauteur in the lady's manner that warned Rosenbury that he was treading upon forbidden ground, and he carelessly changed the subject by remarking:

"Dear Lady Geraldine, I did not come here this morning to provoke your championship of my friend,

nor to make my excuses for the absence of last evening. I have something of importance to say to you!"

The colour fluttered in and out of the maiden's cheeks, as if she knew, or guessed what the communication was to be, but she made no reply.

In her brilliant career as a belle, Geraldine Summers had received many offers of marriage, although she had been no coquette, and by this time she was well versed in the signs that usually preceded a formal declaration of love.

If Rosenbury had been less absorbed in himself he could not have failed to notice the total lack of encouragement in the maiden's face and manner, but as it was he did not notice it.

After a minute spent in endeavouring to recollect the speech he had framed in his mind before coming, Rosenbury said:

"You must have noticed, my dear Lady Geraldine, that I have been very attentive to you of late, and have been a frequent visitor at your house. With a woman's quick intuition, you have, perhaps, already guessed the reason, and my secret may be to you no secret but a plain revelation!"

He paused to give his words the benefit of an impressive silence, and to derive some encouragement from the maiden's looks.

Her face was strangely cold and impulsive, and her gaze was bent upon the floor.

After a little, he resumed:

"Since you first dawned upon my vision, Geraldine, I have loved you. I know of no one who can compare with you in any respect, and I offer you my hand and heart, hoping that they may meet with your gracious acceptance. The name of Rosenbury will shine with new lustre if you will condescend to wear it!"

"I have listened to you, my lord," responded Geraldine, in low, clear tones, "because I was bound by a promise to do so. My uncle foresaw that you would honour me by this proposal, and exacted from me a promise to listen to it. Otherwise, I should have found means to avoid it. I am conscious of the great honour you would do me, but I cannot recipro-

cate your sentiments, and must therefore decline your kind and flattering offer!"

Rosenbury flushed with rage, but he managed to control it, as he exclaimed:

"Will you not take time to consider the subject, Geraldine? Weeks—even months—"

"No period of time, however long, would make me change my decision, my lord!"

"Allow me to ask, Lady Geraldine, if you look higher than me? Perhaps you will marry your old admirer, the duke?"

"I overlook your words and manner, my lord," said the maiden, with considerable hauteur, "in consideration of the pain I have given you. I shall not marry the duke to whom you refer. As to looking higher than you, there is no name in the peerage more honourable than that of Rosenbury. The Rosenburys are an ancient and noble race, and no one appreciates their record more than myself!"

A week before, that compliment would have gratified and inflamed Rosenbury. Now it fell unheeded upon his senses, or served only to remind him that Nature had not included him in that honoured family.

"Then your refusal of me is complete and irrevocable?" he asked, after a pause.

"It is, my lord," was the gentle response.

Rosenbury suppressed his anger by a strong effort, and said:

"May I ask, Geraldine, if you love another?"

The maiden blushed quickly, and replied, with some confusion:

"I cannot answer such a question, my lord. I have given you no right to ask it!"

"Well, I can see for myself!" declared Rosenbury, bitterly, forgetting everything in his passion. "You love some one else, and it may not be difficult to guess who is the object of your love—"

The sudden pallor of the Lady Geraldine checked him, bringing him to his senses.

"Still, I shall not despair," he added, changing his manner. "My devotion must ultimately make an impression upon your ladyship. You will permit me to remain your friend?"

The maiden bowed.

Rosenbury, in his anger, had been about to taunt the Lady Geraldine with a love for Walter Lorraine, but he had checked himself in time to avoid hopelessly spoiling his own cause.

He now reflected that the artist had declared that he should never make known his love to its beautiful object, and he thought that it was quite possible that Geraldine's pride might have prevented her returning Walter's love.

In any case, he would still hope.

He devoted a few minutes to the endeavour to efface all memory of his late rudeness from the mind of the maiden, and he was successful. Geraldine pitied him, and was too generous to remember his angry words.

There was a smile on Rosenbury's lips, but blackness in his heart, as he finally made his adieu to the maiden, and entered the corridor.

"Is his lordship, the earl, at home?" he asked of the servant, who attended to the door.

"Yes, my lord. He is in the library."

"Very well," returned Rosenbury. "You need not announce me. His lordship expects me this morning."

He proceeded towards the library and entered it.

It was tenanted by the Earl of Lindenwood, who sat alone, his face buried in his hands.

He was aroused by the noise of Rosenbury's entrance, and arose to welcome him.

"Good morning, my lord!" he exclaimed. "I am glad to see you—very glad indeed!"

"But you are ill, my lord!" responded Rosenbury, regarding the earl uneasily. "You are surely ill!"

"Oh, no. It's nothing but late hours," was the nervous response. "I was up late last night—in fact, I didn't sleep any. Sit down, Rosenbury, sit down. I want to talk with you."

Rosenbury seated himself and looked at the earl with renewed uneasiness.

Certainly, one night's wakefulness could never have made so serious a change in the earl's appearance.

His face was worn and haggard, and ghastly in its paleness. There were dark circles around his eyes, that betrayed harrowing anxieties and cares. His mouth was drawn down at the corners with deep-cut, rigid lines Rosenbury had never before noticed.

But his manner seemed stranger than his personal appearance.

He appeared uncontrollably nervous, started at the rustling of a paper or the sound of his visitor's voice, and continually cast apprehensive glances over his shoulders, and at the windows.

Rosenbury also noticed that he still wore his ball costume, and that a withered rose-bud dangled loosely in the button-hole of his coat.

"I'm very glad to see you, Rosenbury," declared the earl, apparently unconscious that he had made the same observation before. "Have you seen Geraldine?"

"I come to you fresh from her presence," returned Rosenbury. "I have been having quite a conversation with her."

"Indeed!" exclaimed the earl, regarding his visitor anxiously. "Did—did you propose to her?"

"I did!"

"And she accepted you?"

"No, she refused you!"

"Refused you? Impossible! Why, she as good as owned to me that she loved you, last evening. This must be some girlish caprice. I will go to her and demand an explanation."

He half arose from his chair, but his visitor stretched out his hand to detain him, remarking:

"Wait, my lord. I have much to say to you first. It is best that we understand each other."

The earl flashed an apprehensive glance at his visitor, which Rosenbury failed to notice, and he then said:

"Yes, yes, Rosenbury, let us understand each other. What do you wish to say to me?"

Rosenbury hesitated a moment, in order to marshal his ideas into order, and then he said:

"You have seemed to favour my suit with Geraldine, my lord, and have encouraged me to pay her my addresses."

"Yes, yes! Go on, if you please, Rosenbury."

"You are greatly in debt," pursued the visitor, "so much so that my agreement to make you a handsome settlement on my marriage with your niece immediately ensured me your hearty co-operation?"

"Yes—quite true!"

"I have proposed to her, and have been rejected! But I am not the man to give up when I reach an obstacle," declared Rosenbury, in a firm tone. "I love Geraldine madly—with all my strength! I am determined to possess her! She must and shall be mine! And your co-operation as her guardian is necessary to my success!"

The earl bowed.

"You know well, my lord, the advantages she would derive from a union with me," pursued the visitor. "The name of Rosenbury is equal to any name in the land, in point of age and honour. You know how wealthy I am, and what are my habits. I could make her honoured and happy. I will now show you what you are to gain from this union!"

"Yes, do!" said the earl, with sudden interest.

"Geraldine is very rich. No one knows the amount of her wealth better than yourself, my lord, although it is not in your hands! Coax, bribe, or force her to marry me, my lord, and half her fortune shall be paid without delay into your hands!"

"You are in earnest?" cried the earl.

"In absolute earnest!"

"And you are willing to take her, if I force her to wed you?"

"I am, my lord. I am convinced that, once my wife, she would resign herself to her fate, and I should succeed in winning her love!"

"But, Rosenbury, do you know that half of Geraldine's fortune would be fifty thousand pounds? She has her mother's fortune, all her father could bestow upon her, and legacies from aunts, uncles, and grandparents."

"Yes, I understand all that, my lord; but I repeat my proposal!"

"And I accept it!" cried the earl, his face brightening with his delight. "Geraldine shall be yours, Rosenbury. I swear it! Willing or unwilling, she shall marry you!"

He extended his hand, which Rosenbury clasped, and thus the compact was sealed.

"You say, my lord," said the visitor, with an exultant smile, "that Geraldine is good as owned last evening that she loved me. Are you quite sure that she meant me?"

The earl almost started from his chair, as this question met his hearing, and he replied:

"Who else could she have meant? I thought of course she meant you. She is certainly in love with some one. Her blushes must have had a cause!"

"Can you not think, my lord, of some one in whom she takes great interest?"

"There's Clairville, with whom she danced several times last evening, but she can't love him, for she told me she didn't. Then there's the Duke of Larvallon, but she don't like him! I'm sure I can't tell, Rosenbury. She has a host of admirers. You would be astonished to learn the number of suitors who have applied to me to use my influence in their favour—though, to be sure, not one of them has used the same arguments with me that you have!"

The earl spoke rapidly and nervously, and with a gaiety that too plainly showed itself to be forced.

The reasons that had restrained Rosenbury from taunting Geraldine now prevented him from mentioning Walter Lorraine.

"How soon would you like the marriage to take place, Rosenbury?" asked the earl, after a short silence.

"Any time—this month, if possible. The sooner the better!"

The earl echoed the words with a sigh of relief.

"Then if you marry Geraldine this month," he said, "you will pay me the fifty thousand pounds in cash this month?"

Rosenbury assented.

The two men conversed a long time upon the subject, maturing the plans, plotting for every emergency that might arise, and Rosenbury saw that the earl would put forth every effort for his interests.

"You may make all your preparations for your bridal, Rosenbury," at length declared the earl. "Geraldine has every respect for me as her uncle, and for my authority as her guardian. She will obey me in this matter—particularly when she sees that no other course remains open to her!"

With this assurance still ringing in his ears, Rosenbury at length took his departure in high spirits.

CHAPTER X.

Great souls by instinct to each other turn,
Demand alliance, and in friendship burn.

Addison's Campaign.

LORD ROSENBOURY had not been long gone when Lady Rosenbury called at Lindenwood House, and was ushered into the morning-room, where Geraldine was still sat musing. With a cry of pleasure the maiden sprang up, and was clasped in a tender embrace.

Despite the difference in their ages, there was a strong friendship between the two ladies. The tender, majestic beauty of Lady Rosenbury had first attracted the lonely heart of Geraldine, and her timid advances had been met with such loving kindness that she loved her friend as she would have loved her mother, had she lived, while Lady Rosenbury felt at first a pity for the orphan girl that had ripened into a motherly affection.

Geraldine was not without many feminine friends, and she had also a chaperon and companion combined, but she regarded none of them with the love which she gave to Lady Rosenbury.

"You look as bright, my dear, as though balls were unknown," said her ladyship, playfully. "I almost expected to find that you had not risen. Did you have a pleasant time last evening?"

"Not particularly," replied Geraldine. "I was disappointed because you were not here, and because—"

She hesitated and blushed.

"And because who else was not, my dear?" asked Lady Rosenbury, with a smile, as she drew the maiden to a seat with her upon a sofa. "May I guess?"

Geraldine blushed even more intensely, but made no reply.

"Was it Raymond you missed, my dear?" asked her ladyship, somewhat anxiously.

Geraldine replied in the negative.

Lady Rosenbury gave a sigh of relief, and said:

"Then it must have been my favourite, Walter Lorraine! Was it not?"

The maiden's confusion answered for her.

Lady Rosenbury drew the girl nearer to her, kissed her fondly and with a sort of lingering tenderness, but made no further allusion to Walter.

But in her heart she felt convinced that the young artist's love was returned by Lady Geraldine.

With characteristic delicacy, she carefully refrained from allowing any word to escape her that could show the maiden that her secret was discovered, and she skilfully turned the subject by saying:

"Speaking of Raymond, my dear, has he called upon you this morning?"

"Yes, dear Lady Rosenbury, he left the house but a little while ago!"

There was a hesitation about the manner of the Lady Geraldine as she made this reply that aroused the curiosity of her friend, but she made no effort to elicit her confession.

It was soon voluntarily accorded her, the maiden remarking:

"Lord Rosenbury will probably soon relate to you the particulars of our interview this morning, and I prefer you should hear them first from me. He did me the honour of making me a proposal of marriage."

"And your answer, my dear?"

"I—I refused him! I could not do otherwise, dear Lady Rosenbury. Indeed I could not. You will not be offended with me?"

"Offended with you, my dear Geraldine!" exclaimed Lady Rosenbury. "How little you understand me! If you do not love Raymond, I should be the last person in the world to advise you to marry him!"

"Oh, thank you, my dear friend. You will think me foolish, will you not, when I tell you I actually hesitated about refusing him on your account? I did not know but it might make a barrier between us!"

"Nonsense!" returned her ladyship, with a smile, and a kiss upon the maiden's pure forehead. "What a curious idea that would be—marry a gentleman because you love his mother! So, you don't love Raymond, Geraldine?"

The maiden replied in the negative.

"It is better so! I should dearly have loved to tell you my daughter, Geraldine, for you seem very near to me, but your nature is deeper and grander than Raymond's. He could never have appreciated you, or made you happy," and Lady Rosenbury sighed. "The instinct that led you to refuse him was a wise one. Raymond will marry some pretty butterfly of fashion, who will be better suited to him. I wish he had been more suited to you!"

Geraldine looked up with a wondering expression.

"Ah, you are astonished that I don't praise Raymond to you, my dear! I see you are," and her ladyship smiled. "I have been frank with you, but I have told you no more than you already knew. I wish Raymond were more like Walter Lorraine!"

Geraldine's head drooped upon Lady Rosenbury's bosom.

"And speaking of Walter reminds me of my errand hither," pursued the visitor. "He has been painting a picture for me which is just finished after the labour of months. I want you to see it on the easel as well as I, and share my surprise and pleasure. Will you go to the studio with me?"

"Would—would it be proper for me to go?" faltered Geraldine.

"Do you think, my dear, I would ask you to go where your presence would be improper?" responded Lady Rosenbury, playfully.

"But Wal—Mr. Lorraine might think me presumptuous in coming!"

"Any friend of mine will always be welcome at his studio. Ah! I see you will go. My carriage is at the door, and I will occupy myself with your books until you get ready!"

Geraldine gave her friend an impulsive kiss and withdrew to prepare herself for the proposed call.

"The dear girl!" thought Lady Rosenbury, when she found herself alone. "What a pity that two noble hearts like hers and Walter's should be for ever kept apart because the father of one bore a title and the father of the other was a humble gardener! It does not seem to me right. Raymond has had his opportunity, and Walter shall now have his! If I can bring about an understanding between Walter and Geraldine to-day, I shall be supremely happy! I think, with the fortune I shall bestow upon Walter, I can make matters right with the earth."

From this, the reader will readily perceive that her ladyship had thought more deeply and seriously about Walter's communication since their parting than before. She had reasoned that there was no cause why her favourite should not be happy, and her kind heart instantly set to work to bring about his happiness.

While her ladyship was thus interesting herself in the fortunes of the young artist and Geraldine, the latter was trying on dress after dress, rejecting one and all, much to the dissatisfaction of her maid.

"It seems to me that I can find nothing becoming to me!" she said. "I will wear the one I have on now. It looks as well as any!"

The one in question was a maize-coloured tissue that was extremely becoming to the bright-dark beauty of its wearer.

The toilet—never before so difficult—was soon completed, and the Lady Geraldine rejoined her guest.

"It will not be necessary to speak to my uncle," she said as they went through the corridor. "He has not been at all well to-day and refused to come to breakfast or to see me. In fact, he has seen no one to-day excepting a strange gentleman who called very early this morning—and Lord Rosenbury. I have been quite alarmed about him, but he sent me word by his page that I was to take no notice at all of his illness!"

Lady Rosenbury expressed her sorrow at this intelligence, and a hope that his lordship would be well on the morrow, and they then entered the Rosenbury carriage, and its fair owner gave the order to be driven to Adelphi Terrace.

CHAPTER XI.

The storm of grief bears hard upon your youth,
And bends him, like a drooping flower, to earth.

Rose.

WALTER LORRAINE was in his studio, with his jaunty cap on one side of his head, and his slender form enveloped in his gorgeous dressing-gown, when his lovely visitors were announced, and he came forward to receive them with many expressions of delight.

"I hardly expected you to-day, dear Lady Rosenbury," he exclaimed, "and I am sure that no one

could be more welcome or unexpected than the Lady Geraldine."

Geraldine blushed under his earnest, admiring glances, and then, as he turned towards his companion, she stole a timid glance into his handsome face, which looked pale, but not grief-stricken.

The thought that he was not mourning inconsolably for the death of Mrs. Lorraine gave her great comfort, and her spirits immediately became buoyant. "I suppose I may behold my picture now, Walter," said Lady Rosenbury, smiling. "I assure you I am quite impatient to do so."

By way of reply, Walter wheeled the easel into the best light, and conducted the ladies to it.

They stood in perfect silence as they gazed upon it, and the young artist anxiously watched the expressions of their faces for their verdict.

Long before a single word was uttered he knew their opinions.

Their kindling faces, their rapt expressions, all showed the admiration they could not conceal.

The silence was at length broken by Lady Rosenbury, who turned and clasped the hand of the young artist, exclaiming:

"Walter, I am proud of you!"

"You are a true artist, Walter," continued her ladyship. "This picture surpasses all your others, and bears the stamp of true genius."

"I—I cannot tell you how much I admire and appreciate it, Mr. Lorraine," faltered the Lady Geraldine. "I feel its great beauty, and quite long to lose myself in those cool dim aisles among the trees."

Walter expressed his pleasure and gratitude at their complimentary remarks, and Lady Rosenbury exclaimed:

"Look, Geraldine, at that lovely Eve on her mound of flowers."

"She is very—very charming!" replied the maiden, with some hesitation.

"Of course she is, my dear, for do you notice that she wears your face? Why, Walter," added Lady Rosenbury, "you have made an excellent likeness of the Lady Geraldine. Did you intend it?"

Both the young people blushed, and the artist answered:

"Yes, I intended it, dear Lady Rosenbury. I wanted to paint a perfect woman, and—so I couldn't help making a picture of the Lady Geraldine."

Lady Rosenbury was greatly charmed at this confession—much more so than if she herself had been its object—and she stole a rapid glance at Geraldine to see if she had listened to it unmoved.

The maiden had drooped her head, but one instant's scarlet cheek was revealed to her friend.

"The picture will have a double value to me, my dear Walter," said Lady Rosenbury, after a brief silence, "from having Lady Geraldine's portrait in it, and under all those charming accessories of flowers and sunbeams and shady bower. You have a very vivid imagination, my dear boy, and your picture is well worthy its title—'The Temple of Eden.'"

"I am glad, dear Lady Rosenbury," returned Walter, with emotion, "that I have at last something to offer you that may not be deemed unworthy your acceptance. It is fitting that the first fruits of the genius you have cultivated should be laid at your feet. Would that the picture were equal to my conceptions of what it should be!"

"In conception and execution, my dear Walter, there is nothing left to be desired. I repeat that I am proud of you."

The tears sprang to the artist's eyes, and he regarded her ladyship with a look of loving admiration.

"My dear Geraldine," said her ladyship, "you have not so good a position as I to look at the picture. As I am to have it all my life, allow me to give you my place while I look over Walter's portfolios of engravings."

She gave place to Geraldine and retreated to the window, quite delighted at her innocent stratagem in throwing the young people into each other's society.

"I am sure that Walter's stern resolution must give way now," she thought, making a pretence of looking over a pile of engravings. "At any rate, he shall have a chance to declare his love, if he wishes to do so!"

While she was thinking thus benevolently of their welfare, the young people themselves stood in silent embarrassment.

The Lady Geraldine was the first to recover her self-possession and to speak.

"I should like a copy of this picture," she said, "or at least another painting from your hand, Mr. Lorraine! Why do you not have this put on exhibition? It would add greatly to your fame!"

"I do not care to exhibit it, Lady Geraldine. But the wish you have so kindly expressed to have another of my paintings shall be gratified. I feel highly honoured by your desire!"

A short silence succeeded, and then Walter said:

"You are not offended with me, Lady Geraldine, for having made you the priestess in my picture?"

"Offended, Mr. Lorraine?" exclaimed the maiden, in surprise. "Offended because you have paid me such a delicate compliment—because you have caused me to share in some slight degree your fame? Oh no! How could you think so?"

"I did not know, but your pride might revolt at the liberty I had taken, Lady Geraldine. I should not have done it had not the picture been painted for your dearest friend and mine—Lady Rosenbury!"

"So you thought me proud, Mr. Lorraine?"

"Are you not?" asked Walter.

"I have pride, Mr. Lorraine, but not the pride you mean. My pride would prevent me doing a dis honourable action, or being weak and foolish, even if I had no principle to sustain me. My pride demands that I shall be worthy of my own self-respect!"

"And you have no pride in your birth and station, Lady Geraldine?" asked Walter, anxiously.

The maiden hesitated a moment, and then replied:

"Why certainly, Mr. Lorraine, it is pleasant to reflect that one can look back upon a long line of ancestors who were renowned for their wisdom and bravery, but I do not place too much importance upon such things. Another person, of humble birth, perhaps, may have had ancestors as good and noble-hearted as mine, for there is a great deal of unwritten heroism in this world. And then it is often the case that the descendant of a noble line is a very unworthy man. Good principles do not always go with the blood!"

"Then, Lady Geraldine, you do not consider the rank of your acquaintances before you become friendly with them?"

"No, indeed. I look only to the person in question, in forming friends. If the person is good and noble, I care little whether his father worked for his living or lived upon other's work!"

Lady Geraldine had expressed her opinions without a thought of their bearing towards the listener, but she was aroused to consciousness of the meaning that might be put upon them, as Walter said, timidly:

"Would these principles guide you in selecting a husband, Lady Geraldine? Pardon the question, but I am anxious to know if one so noble as yourself would wed beneath her?"

The maiden blushed, and replied, in an embarrassed manner:

"No. I would never wed beneath me, Mr. Lorraine. By that, I mean I would not marry one whom I could not respect and revere as well as love; some one on whom I could lean, with every faith in his superior wisdom. As one cannot have everything, I should not be particular as to my husband's birth or fortune. Of course," she added, with a smile, "even if I loved, I would never marry a person whose relatives I should be ashamed of. They might be poor, but I should think none the less of them for that. But I should object to calling a dissolute, intemperate person 'father,' or an idle, slatternly woman 'mother.' You comprehend me?"

By the last two or three sentences the Lady Geraldine imagined that she had removed all personal application from her remarks, and had given them a sort of general tone.

Her words rang in Walter's ears, imparting hope to his great love for her.

As her concluding sentences had not been intended to apply to him, so he gave no heed to them, but derived encouragement from what had preceded.

His countenance was suddenly transfigured by the great love he felt for her, and it showed itself in his luminous eyes, in the quiver of his sensitive mouth, and in the half-restrained eagerness of his manner.

But the maiden, fearing she had said too much, had turned her gaze upon the picture, and noticed none of these things.

"Lady Geraldine," began Walter, in a tone tremulous with feeling, "dear Lady Geraldine, I—"

He paused abruptly.

If he had been, indeed, about to make a declaration of his passion to its object, his design was frustrated, for the door leading into the ante-room was rudely burst open, and an ill-looking man entered.

It was Colte Lorraine!

He wore the same garments as on his previous visit, and displayed in addition a quantity of cheap jewellery, which added to the vulgarity of his appearance.

His countenance wore an expression of good-natured imbecility, owing to the fact that he was under the influence of ardent spirits. One eye was half-closed, giving him what is popularly termed a "knowing" expression, and his battered hat was set rakishly on one side and a little at the back of his shock-head.

He was pursued into the studio by Parkin, who had vainly endeavoured to keep him out, and whose

countenance now expressed the deepest indignation at his unwarrantable intrusion.

"Le'm'be, le'm'be!" ejaculated Loraine, assuming a menacing attitude. "Away, fl'a! I say, Wal'er, where are you? Wal'er! Wal'er!"

Walter was overwhelmed with astonishment and mortification.

If the earth would only have opened at that moment and swallowed him up, he would have been intensely thankful.

Alas, now, for all his dreams of love!

Geraldine, with the repugnance to be expected from one so refined and so daintily nurtured, shrank before the coarse intruder, and crept nearer to Walter as if for protection.

She had not the slightest idea that the handsome artist could have aught in common with this degraded being.

Lady Rosenbury arose and approached Walter also, but she scrutinized the intruder narrowly, his countenance looking familiar to her.

"Come out here!" cried Parkin. "See, here, fellow, you leave, or I'll call the police!"

"I tell you, fl'a," responded Loraine, "want see Wal'er. Where are you, my son? Ah, see you! Don't tend to deny poor old father, do ye? Heart yearns over yo, Wal'er."

With this remark, he tottered towards the artist and extended his hand.

Walter's cheek burned, and he endeavoured to summon his self-possession, but he felt indescribably humiliated. He extended his hand mechanically, without thinking of what he was doing, and Loraine grew quite maudlin over it, shaking it again and again.

As Parkin beheld this recognition of the stranger, he retreated to the ante-room, convinced that the fellow was some person of extremely eccentric habits, but of good repute.

"En'taining fren's, eh, Wal'er?" remarked Loraine, tipping back his hat, and balancing himself alternately upon his heels and toes. "That's right, my son. Youth's time for gaiety. Find it so myself. Ah, is't possible? Whom I behold? Is't la'ship? Yes, 's Lady Rosenbury. How's la'ship do?"

"Walter, is this man your father?" asked Lady Rosenbury, recovering from her astonishment. "Is he really alive, and returned from Australia?"

"Jee 'so, la'ship," said Loraine, interrupting the artist. "Sit exactly. Sure, la'ship, feel highly honoured at seein' you here, in such a frenly way," and his manner grew important. "Wal'er don't say much, but he feels honoured too. Speak up, my boy. We 'preciate this visit, don' we?"

"Will you go into the inner chamber, father, until I am at liberty?" said Walter, in a clear tone, though the room seemed to reel around him. "I will see you by-and-by."

"Shamed yer poor old father, Wal'er?" asked Loraine, sullying. "Needn't be. I'm as good as any one. La'ship don't feel 'bove me!"

"I think you had better follow Walter's advice," observed Lady Rosenbury, sharing her favourite's mortification and chagrin. "When we are gone, Walter will be at liberty to talk with you."

"La'ship puts on air, eh? Better not. I could say things—but won't! Got secret, though. Know where I'll be well treated, if you and Wal'er turn on me!"

He balanced himself more defiantly, and looked at each member of the group.

"Pretty girl—very pretty girl!" he remarked, regarding the Lady Geraldine with the air of a connoisseur in feminine beauty. "Come see Wal'er, eh? Wal'er han'some. You'd make a pretty couple, if do say it."

Walter made another effort to induce him to withdraw, and this time his voice and manner were stern and decisive.

Loraine braced himself, however, and persisted in his dogged obstinacy, and Lady Rosenbury remarked:

"I think we had better go, Geraldine. We will come again to look at the picture, Walter. And by the way, Walter, can't you visit me this evening?"

Walter shook his head.

"Don't give way so, my poor boy," whispered her ladyship. "This will make no difference with Geraldine, I assure you."

"Dear Lady Rosenbury, you did not hear her say what I did!" returned Walter. "But, perhaps, it is best so! I had begun to cherish a foolish dream."

He wrung her ladyship's hand, and she replied:

"I must see you soon, my dear boy. Come up to-morrow!"

She turned away, and the Lady Geraldine, who had by this time fully comprehended the scene, approached Walter, shook hands with him, and gave him a cordial invitation to call upon her.

There was a tone of pity in her voice, and her manner was more than ever friendly.

"Don' be in hurry, fren's," expostulated Loraine. "Don' mean drive you off. Jee' came in see Wal'er minute. Like be sociable. Like get quainted with Wal'er wife as is to be, my daughter! Needn't frown so, Wal'er! I shan't budge inch! If don't want me here, know where company'll be 'ceptable! By way, la'ship," he added, suddenly, "how's Raymon—my lad, you know. Is his ludship well?"

Lady Rosenbury bowed, bestowed a tender, maternal smile upon Walter, and led the way from the apartment, followed by the Lady Geraldine.

Walter sank upon a couch overwhelmed with grief.

The maiden's words had given him hope and encouragement, and he had been about to offer her the heart she had won, and beg her to become his wife.

"How she must despise me now!" he thought. "With what justifiable anger she must regard my presumption!"

A pang shot through his heart, keener than any he had ever felt—a pang to which his late grief had been the wildest joy.

"Don' feel grieved, Wal'er!" exclaimed Loraine. "Call her back, if say so!"

The youth turned away his head, and his features moved convulsively with his emotions, as he murmured:

"Lost—for ever lost! An unbridgeable gulf now rolls between the Lady Geraldine and me!"

(To be continued.)

RED AND WHITE.

A DANISH LEGEND.

THERE once lived in Denmark a powerful count, who was the proudest man of his time. He owned the whole island of Laland, and had built a large castle on its coast. The castle was named Gyllenster, and he was so rich that he might have covered every inch of its stones with gold.

Yet the count's riches were nothing compared to his pride. When the king, struck by the beauty of the old count's daughter, asked her in marriage of her father, the latter seemed to think he was doing the king a great honour to accept him as a son-in-law.

The young countess was beautiful, and more modest and gentle still than beautiful; and when the count said to her one day, "Daughter, you are to become the king's wife, so be ready to obey," the countess only replied: "My honoured father, I am your obedient child."

But a little while after, she went to saunter under the tall beech trees, and wept, though she scarcely knew why.

It chanced that she was seen by a young knight, who had lately entered the count's service, when he approached her with a courteous greeting, and entreated her not to weep, saying she might command his services, and that he would revenge her on any one who dared to vex her. On hearing this, the countess smiled and went back into the castle.

Next day, when they met under the beech trees, she was not weeping, neither did the knight speak any words of comfort, but they walked side by side in deep silence. But the day after they found their speech, and if the birds who had built their nests in the beech trees could have spoken, they might have told a pretty tale.

One day it happened that the knight remarked a kerchief, as white as snow, in the lady's hand, and having long wished for some token of her love, he observed this kerchief was a fit emblem of the purity of her mind, and that he would be happy beyond measure if she would bestow it upon him.

The countess became as pale as the kerchief she carried; yet she could not bear to refuse the handsome youth's humble entreaties, and therefore, gave it to him.

And then there came another day, when they met in the beechen grove; and this time the countess held a kerchief in her hand, that shone brighter and redder than the sunset across the ocean.

When they parted, the knight seized the tip of the kerchief, saying:

"Beautiful lady, this kerchief is the image of the love we feel for one another, therefore give it me as an everlasting keepsake!"

Then the countess's glowing cheeks became redder than the kerchief; but she loved the young man so dearly that she could not say him nay; and gave him, not only the token he coveted, but her beating heart into the bargain.

While all this was taking place, there came a message from the king, announcing that he was about to repair to Laland to woo the fair countess himself.

When the proud count heard this news he made great preparations to receive his royal guest, and the whole castle was turned topsy-turvy; and as he was coming and going and overlooking everything himself,

he happened to enter the beechen grove, whither he scarcely ever went, and surprised the young knight at his daughter's feet.

In his rage, he was upon the point of felling him to the earth, when he recollects this would be conferring an honour rather than inflicting punishment, and therefore determined to have him executed in a disgraceful manner, before all the people.

He now called his satellites, who seized upon the culprit, and the lovers had only just time to give each other to understand, by a hasty word, that neither would outlive the other.

A faithful maid bribed the goatherd to let her speak to the knight before his execution, in order to bring him a last greeting from his beloved.

"Tell your lady," said the knight, "that I shall die to-morrow. The count means me to be executed on the other side of the deep moat surrounding the castle. I entreat my sweet lady to do me the favour to appear at her window, that I may see her once more before I die. My companions-in-arms are now waiting on the count, to beg for my life. Should he grant it, contrary to my expectations, then I will wave the white kerchief my lady gave me, even as a white flag; but if I am doomed to die, I will display the red kerchief, and then she will do as she thinks fit."

The young knight had two brothers-in-arms, one of whom was as true as gold, as he proved in this instance; for no sooner had he heard his friend was sentenced to die, than he hastened to the shore, and steered towards the king's vessel, which he saw afar off on the high seas, in order to entreat the greater lord of the two to interfere and obtain his poor friend's pardon.

But the other comrade, who himself entertained a secret passion for the beautiful countess, envied him his happiness, and had sworn to compass his ruin. He therefore insinuated himself into the unfortunate knight's confidence, and having obtained permission to spend the last remaining hours in prison with him, he wormed all his secrets out of him, not excepting that of the red and white kerchief.

On hearing this, though glad at heart, he said, with a sorrowful countenance:

"I will accompany you on your last walk, and would to Heaven I may be able to hand you the white kerchief."

When the hour for the execution had drawn near, the countess stood at the window, pale as death, but perfectly calm. Beside her lay a dagger.

The old count had refused the petitions, and ordered the execution to take place at the appointed hour. But it had been decided otherwise.

The king had listened to the entreaties of the knight's other friend, and touched by his devotion, had sent him with his signet-ring to the count with the command to spare the knight.

The trusty messenger hastened back to the shore, mounted a swift horse, and flew to the castle.

"Mercy! mercy! Here's the king's signet!" cried he. And the count grumbled as he felt obliged to send away the executioner.

The young man sank upon his knee, half-fainting; whilst his false friend, hastily seizing the red kerchief, waved it several times above his head.

On perceiving this signal, the countess said, in a trembling voice:

"It is all over with him!" and snatching up the dagger that lay ready, buried it in her bosom.

No sooner had this dreadful news spread abroad, than the knight hastened to the castle and flung himself down beside her lifeless corpse; and when the bystanders tried to draw him away, they found his spirit had departed.

The hard-hearted father never spoke again from that hour, nor did he leave the castle any more.

As to the traitor whose wickedness had occasioned all these misfortunes, no sooner wore his odious machinations brought to light, than he was banished from the kingdom.

PECULIARITIES OF ANTS.—Ants do not generally make their own way out of their cocoons, like moths, or other insects, though the ants can do this. The insects usually cut the passage to let them out. Huber describes males and females lying in their envelopes or cocoons; the workers assembled round them, when three or four mounted upon a cocoon, and began to open it with their teeth, next tearing it away with some threads of silk, and then pinching or biting holes in it. Some raised a little slip cut out of the length of the cocoon, whilst others drew the insect gently from its imprisonment. Still, the body was confined by another membrane, which the ant itself could not get rid of; so the workers removed this again-like covering, drew out the horn-like members on the head, then the feet and wings, and lastly the body, &c. The insect could now walk, and eagerly received the food which had been placed near it, and which the workers readily gave it.



[THE LATE VISCOUNT PALMERSTON.]

THE DEATH OF LORD PALMERSTON.

With heartfelt regret we have to place on record the death of Viscount Palmerston, Prime Minister of England. His lordship died, after a brief illness—indeed, it is said, by a cold caught whilst driving—at Brocket Hall, Herts, on Wednesday, the 18th of October, at eleven o'clock a.m., having attained the lengthened age of eighty-one years, except two days.

Henry John Temple was the third Viscount Palmerston, and was born at Broadlands, near Romsey, on the 29th of October, 1784. Although an Irish Peer, his descent is traced to Saxon ears anterior to the Conquest. In the arms of his family may still be seen the eagle displayed of that Leofric, Earl of Mercia, who is remarkable chiefly for his treatment of his wife, the Lady Godiva. With the death of Lord Palmerston the title has become extinct.

We need say nothing here of the figure made by the Temples in English history; and it is only necessary to add that the deceased nobleman was descended from a branch of the family that settled in Ireland about the time of the Reformation, and there acquired the Irish peerage which for nearly sixty years has been one of the most familiar names heard in the House of Commons. His father died while he was yet a minor; and having spent three years in the University of Edinburgh, he graduated at Cambridge; where he offered himself, in his 22nd year, as a candidate to represent the University on the death of Mr. Pitt. His opponent on that occasion was Lord Henry Petty, the late Marquis of Lansdowne, who at an age little beyond that of his rival had been appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer, and who, backed by the influence of office, won an easy victory

over the man with whom for many long years in after-life he was to be associated in the conduct of public affairs. In the following year Lord Palmerston found a seat for the borough of Newport, in the Isle of Wight. In 1809 he was appointed to the now extinct office of Secretary at War; and being thus armed with ministerial influence, he had little difficulty in securing his seat for the University in 1811.

At this period of his life, and for many years afterwards, his lordship was a member of the Tory party, then all-powerful in the State. There were bickerings among the members of that party—jealousies between rival statesmen, intrigues and personal quarrels, leading at times to mortal combat; but in all these complications the young planceman took no share. He went with the stream. He adhered to the strongest. He occupied Castlereagh's place at the War Office when Castlereagh resigned in dudgeon and challenged Canning for treachery to him; he continued to hold it when, soon afterwards, the ministry was re-constructed and Canning was excluded.

He accepted office under the Duke of Portland; he retained it under Mr. Percival; he did not quit it under the Earl of Liverpool. Canning and Goderich came and went, but Lord Palmerston was still to be found at the War Office; and it was not till 1828, when he and some of his colleagues resigned in a mistake, which the Duke of Wellington insisted "should be no mistake," that the tenacious minister was at last disengaged from his office, and found himself in Opposition.

He resumed office in 1830, after a new election consequent on the death of George IV., under Earl Grey, as Minister for Foreign Affairs. From the period when his lordship was in the 46th year of his age, until his

death on Wednesday last, in his 81st year, Lord Palmerston was "a power in the State." He was the type and the glory of his countrymen and his country. No British Minister ever attained to more world-wide fame than he acquired. All over the globe his name was invoked as the symbol of English generosity and English omnipotence. The Bedouin of the Desert recognized in "Palmerston Pasha" a being whom Allah had endowed with more than mortal power. The negro on the Guinea Coast knew that Palmerston was his friend, and worked day and night against slavery. In the backwoods of America, or in the jungles of Siam, an Englishman felt that he had an infallible safeguard if he had Palmerston's passport to show. Palmerston, it was imagined, would move the whole force of the British empire in order that this wandering Englishman—*Civis Romanus*—might not be defrauded of his Worcester sauce amid the ice of Siberia, or of his pale ale on the Mountains of the Moon. He could do anything, and he would do everything. Nothing great was accomplished without being attributed to him. He was supposed to have his pocket full of constitutions, to have a voice in half the Cabinets in Europe, to have monarchs past reckoning under his thumb. He humbled the Shah, he patronized the Sultan, he abolished the Mogul, he conquered the Brother of the Sun, he opened to the world the empire which had been walled round for centuries by impregnable barriers, he defied the Czar, and the Emperor of the French felt safe when he received the assurances of the brilliant English minister.

The news of Lord Palmerston's death has been received in every home throughout these islands, from the palace to the cottage, with a feeling like that of personal bereavement. There is not a province in our vast colonial empire, and there are few civilized nations in the world, which will not have heard without an emotion of regret that Lord Palmerston no longer guides the policy of England. Never again will that familiar voice be heard in the counsels of Europe, or in the British Senate, of which he almost seemed a part; never again will that native gaiety of spirits enliven the social circle in which he loved to move. The death of no other subject could have left such a void in the hearts of his countrymen, for no other has been identified so long or so closely with our national life.

Born in the first year of Pitt's first administration, and some years before the downfall of the old French monarchy, he had witnessed the whole drama of European politics in the nineteenth century, and in the most important scenes of it had taken a leading part. He belonged to the age of Wellington and Napoleon, of Nesselrode and Metternich, of Castlereagh and Talleyrand, of Liverpool and Canning, no less than to our own.

He was already in office, as Secretary at War, when Mr. Gladstone was not yet in his cradle, and four years before Lord Russell, then barely of age, was returned for Tavistock. He continued to hold the same post under six Governments in succession, and for more than twenty years; he was Foreign Secretary for more than fourteen out of the twenty years from 1831 to 1851, and he had been a member of every Cabinet, except those of Sir Robert Peel and Lord Derby, since the accession of Mr. Canning to power.

So extended and so various an experience in State affairs is almost without a parallel in history, and the vigour of mind and body which enabled him to lead the House of Commons when he had passed the age of eighty has certainly been given to very few in ancient or modern times.

He who could win and keep a commanding position in this free country for more than half a century of foreign wars and domestic changes, against formidable opponents, but without making a personal enemy, who could increase in prestige and Parliamentary address with advancing years, and who died Prime Minister, enjoying to the last the full confidence of the Sovereign and the people, must have possessed one of those rare combinations of qualities which men call greatness. His almost unique success raises Lord Palmerston above the ordinary level of his contemporaries, and places him in competition with the most eminent of his predecessors.

He had not the splendid oratorical genius and daring spirit of Chatham, the lofty magnanimity of Pitt, or the constructive ability of Peel. His name will not be remembered in connection with the triumph of a grand cause, nor was his life devoted to the development of any simple idea; and yet he was a great man, unless that title be confined by an arbitrary limitation to a prescribed class of moral and intellectual virtues.

In everything but rhetorical accomplishments—classical graces of diction—he was more than the equal of Canning, his early friend and leader

In political knowledge and practical acquaintance with all the departments of State he was greatly superior not only to Canning, but to all Canning's successors, if we except Sir R. Peel. In familiarity with the labyrinthine complications of modern European diplomacy he excelled all living politicians at home or abroad. In the art of distinguishing the prevailing current of public opinion, in readiness of tact, in versatility of mind and humour, in the masterly ease with which he handled the reins of Government, and in the general felicity of his political temperament, he had no rival in his own generation. To these gifts, however, he added an unwearied application to duty which would itself have earned him a high position in the State; and it is probable that the greatest achievements of his foreign policy could not have been accomplished without the industry which had thus become habitual to him. The Belgian question, the Portuguese question, the Spanish question, the Swiss question, and the Eastern question involved difficulties of a kind and degree which energy alone could not have surmounted.

The vigour which Lord Palmerston displayed in checking the ambition of Mehemet Ali, and demanding the release of Kossoth is not more remarkable than the patience and skill which made him a match for Talleyrand in negotiation, and enabled him to baffle the subtle intrigues of Louis Philippe and M. Thiers. The memorable speech in which he reviewed his own administration of foreign affairs displayed all these gifts at once; but it was followed at no long interval by his resignation of the Foreign Office, to which he never afterwards returned.

Thenceforward Lord Palmerston was Prime Minister designate; and when he succeeded Lord Aberdeen in 1855 the country accepted him with exclamation as its natural leader. How he succeeded in bringing the Russian war to a favourable issue, how he forfeited power for a short year by an inopportune concession to France, how he rose from his temporary fall like a giant refreshed, and how he exercised his recovered strength during the last six years, is known to the youngest of our readers. Palmerston the Prime Minister was essentially the same man with Palmerston the Foreign Secretary and Palmerston the Secretary at War, but he no longer presented the same characteristics to the world. Having been accused of meddling too much in the internal concerns of other States, he lived to be reproached for his persistent non-intervention. Having been identified throughout the thirty years' peace with a policy inherited from the great war, he lived to be regarded as the most pacific of English Ministers.

It will be for posterity to pass an impartial judgment on the motives which governed this extraordinary career. It is for us to make due allowance for the errors and faults which were redeemed by merits so conspicuous. His fidelity to his colleagues has, indeed, become proverbial, and few men have shown themselves more oblivious of personal affronts. He has not, however, escaped the charge of indifference to principles, of a reluctance to bring forward new men—in short, of that time-serving which makes no provision for the future. He was not a progressive statesman, and was not unfairly taunted by advanced Reformers with having "no policy."

At the same time, he must be credited with some performances and some excuses for non-performance, which his critics are apt to forget. He was one of the earliest and most constant enemies of the Slave Trade; he was a staunch friend of Roman Catholic Emancipation; he abandoned the ground taken up by Canning in advocating the Reform Bill; he was a Freethinker long before Sir Robert Peel became a convert. Above all, he was a steadfast and devoted partisan of constitutional liberty in every part of the Continent.

In his own country it must be confessed that he saw little which he desired to change, but it would be unjust to attribute his apparent neglect of the younger Liberals mainly to this cause. He was virtually the head of two parties, the Whigs and the Peelites, each containing many powerful candidates for office, and was not altogether free to set aside their claims in favour of junior aspirants. Mr. Cobden might be offered a seat in the Cabinet without offending any one, but the same could not be said of untried men, and in surrounding himself with veteran politicians, Lord Palmerston may have yielded to a sense of expediency, rather than to his own inclination. He may have made a mistake in this respect, as well as in his so-called desertion of Reform, but it was a mistake endorsed by the great majority of the nation. While he conciliated the Conservatives, it did not prevent his commanding the support of the Liberals, or from becoming almost the idol of the people.

The secret and source of his great popularity was his boundless sympathy with all classes of his countrymen. He was a truly large-hearted man, and moved among men and women of every rank as one of themselves. He was never so happy or so much

at home as when talking to a mixed audience, the merrier and noisier the better. On the Tiverton hustings, at agricultural dinners, at the *soirées* of Mechanics' Institutions, at gatherings of Volunteers, wherever people, and especially young people, might have met to enjoy themselves, he was always ready to make them a speech, mingling grave with gay, and tempering the off-hand sallies of his humour with the fruits of his matchless experience. His unfailing good-humour and inexhaustible animal spirits, if they obscured to some extent his more solid endowments, not only carried him through anxieties under which many a younger man has sunk, but endeared him to all who came within their influence. Englishmen were proud of him, not so much because he bearded foreign despots in his prime, or exhibited marvellous physical activity in his old age, as because they believed him to be stout-hearted and benevolent statesman of the good old English stock. They did him no more than justice.

He has left none like him—none who can rally round him so many followers of various opinions, none who can give us so happy a respite from the violence of party-warfare, none who can bring to the work of statesmanship so precious a store of recollections. It is impossible not to feel that Lord Palmerston's death marks an epoch in English politics.

In 1839 Lord Palmerston married the sister of his old colleague, Lord Melbourne, and the widow of Earl Cowper. In 1832 Lord Palmerston was created a Knight Grand Cross of the Bath, and in 1841 a Knight of the Tower and Sword of Portugal, and a K.G. in 1857. In 1861 he was appointed Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports and Governor of Dover Castle.

As we have stated, the title is now extinct, his lordship having left as his descendants only two daughters, who are married. Thus, at the end of his long career,

He gave his honours to the world again,
His better part to heaven, and sleeps in peace.

THE STRANGER'S SECRET.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"The Seventh Marriage," "The Warning Voice," "Moss and his Idol," &c.

CHAPTER LXVIII.

A DIABOLICAL ACT.

Stung with too keen a sympathy, the maid
Brought with moving lips, mute, startful, dark!

Cold dew-drops gather on my limbs,
My ears throb hot, my eye-balls start,
My brain with horrid tumult swims,
Wild is the tempest of my heart;
And my thick and struggling breath
Imitates the toll of death. *Ibid.*

THE men who brought Cheney Tofts to the Manor House had a very brief explanation to offer.

They had been startled in the quiet midnight by a loud explosion—a much louder explosion than the discharge of a gun would have occasioned.

Unable to account for it, they had gone in the direction whence the sound proceeded, and had there found the prostrate Tofts, his face blackened, his hair singed, his clothes rent into tatters, and his general aspect that of a dead man.

One of them chanced to recognize him, and on his advice they bore him to the Manor House.

News of what had happened spread rapidly through the house. Sir Noel and Lady Edgecombe quitted their beds and came down into the hall, where the insensible form of their guest lay full length on the marble flags. Flora, too, soon joined them.

The astonishment of all was great; but in Flora Edgecombe's breast there was a conflict of emotions which hardly found expression in her face. What if this man, her persecutor and the foe of her family, should be dead? Her mind ran in review, hastily, almost instantaneously, the consequences of such a fatality. And even as it did so, it was occupied by another dread inquiry—what had been her father's share in bringing about this catastrophe? It was impossible that she should fail to see the sparkle of delight in the baronet's eyes, contrasting so oddly with the serious concern expressed in his face. Lady Edgecombe, too, could ill conceal her satisfaction, though it contended with natural womanly sympathy. What conclusion was Flora to draw from all this?

What?

A cold shudder crept over her as she asked herself the question.

There was, as she saw too clearly, one way out of the troubles which environed those she loved.

Gabriel's accuser, Sir Noel's foe, the family adversary, lay outstretched on the marble at her feet. His death would end all their trials and sufferings. Was

it possible that, seeing and knowing this, Sir Noel had yielded to the temptation of compassing it by foul and violent means?

"I will not believe it," she thought. "I despise myself for entertaining the idea."

She did entertain it nevertheless, and as the night passed, it deepened and intensified in her mind.

Meanwhile, the first thing to be thought of was medical aid, and, as a matter of course, Doctor Doriani was sent for. The messenger despatched for him returned with all speed.

"The doctor was not at home. Had been absent all day. Nothing was known of his movements by his servant, and he could not communicate with madame, as the door of her room had been locked since the morning."

Strange news this!

On leaving the Manor House in the morning, Doriani had not mentioned having received any call, or any engagement likely to take him from home during the day; but, of course, he might have gone to attend some case of emergency, though he usually left word as to his movements. What the messenger had said respecting Juanita was wholly inexplicable.

In the absence of medical advice, all that could be done was to convey the unconscious form of the apparently dead man to his room, and to apply such restoratives as the resources of the house afforded. These were to an extent successful; by daylight, Cheney Tofts had opened his eyes, though evidently blind to what was passing around him, and had subsequently dropped into a quiet sleep. Whatever injury he had received, its effects were only temporary. He might be disfigured, maimed; but he was still far—very far, as it appeared—from having received hurt or harm which would prove fatal.

As it was most desirable that a doctor should be in attendance, Doriani was sought everywhere during the night and the early morning; but he was not forthcoming. It was then resolved to send to Nestleborough for one of the resident surgeons, and as being a good horseman, Glidley was selected as the messenger. He was speedily communicated with, and informed of the nature of the duty required of him.

On being apprised of the circumstances under which his enemy had been discovered in the park, his emotion was extreme.

He became unnaturally excited.

"Was the man likely to die?" he inquired, with the utmost eagerness.

"That depended," was the answer.

"On what?"

"Very likely on the expedition with which he discharged the duty entrusted to him."

"What? Is all hangs on whether he could bring a doctor in good time?"

"Yes."

A peculiar expression came into the keeper's face, and he bit his nether lip in a manner singular in one not accustomed to express strong emotions.

"If the doctor I bring him is necessary to his recovery," he muttered between his clenched teeth as he rode off, "I wouldn't give much for his chance of life. Not much."

To this feeling might be attributed the fact that high noon came and no doctor had arrived, but by that time Tofts was sufficiently recovered to make a statement of what had happened to him.

This he did in an indignant and somewhat offensive manner, in the presence of Mr. Flimkirk junior, who at his request took down the statement in the presence of several members of the household. Had it been possible, he would have secured the attendance of his own lawyer; but as he could not tell what might result from the injuries he had received, he adopted this course in order that, as he significantly put it, "justice might befall the miscreants who had planned and carried out this diabolical scheme for his destruction."

That remark was levelled at Sir Noel Edgecombe. There could hardly be a doubt of it; and Flora held her breath in suspense as she waited for what might follow, fearing, trembling lest it might involve her father in some difficulty of a criminal nature.

Cheney Tofts' statement took this form:

"In the dusk of the evening," he said, "I was walking through the park, making my way for the southern gate. It rained, but I did not heed that; I was restless and agitated with conflicting thoughts arising out of the peculiar circumstances in which I am placed, and I felt that exercise was necessary for me. So, as I was saying, I took the road towards the south gate, and had gone some distance when I noticed a lad—a shepherd's boy it might be—coming towards me. He came slowly and eyed me well. Still I took little heed of him; so little, indeed, that I should not know him again."

"You are sure of that?" asked Sir Noel, eagerly.

"Quite sure—I should not have been able to speak to anything respecting him, except that he carried a parcel half under his frock to protect it from the rain.

If it had not happened that he stopped and spoke to me."

"Then you saw his face?" asked Flimkid junior.

"Distinctly."

"And hearing his voice, you will be able to identify him?"

"Probably. But it was growing dark."

"Still—but proceed."

It was not easy, for the man was in pain, from the effects of the treatment he had received, and which had left his face a hideous spectacle. But after a pause, during which he turned uneasily in his bed, he proceeded.

"He had accosted me," he said, "to ask the near way to the Manor House. Supposing him to be one of the people about the place, I was surprised at the question and I looked sharply up. 'Was he a stranger in these parts?' I demanded to know. 'Yes' was his answer. 'And what was he doing here?' His reply was that he was going with a letter, to the House, and on further inquiry I found that it was addressed to myself. What he called a letter was the parcel he carried partly hid under his loose frock. On my telling him who I was, he placed this unsuspiciously in my hands. It was curious. I thought so at the time, and while turning the parcel over and over, I inquired whence he had brought it? Before I had put that question, the lad had slunk off some ten yards. I called him back. He came slouching reluctantly along, and awaited my further questioning. In reply to the query I had just put, he said he was the carter's lad, and was instructed by his master to deliver the parcel to me. Satisfied with this, I foolishly let him go—foolishly, I say, because a moment's reflection ought to have shown me that any one in the employment of a carter of this neighbourhood would have known the way to the Manor House as well or even better than I did."

"You have reason to suppose, then, that this lad was not what he represented himself to be?" said the young lawyer.

"You shall judge for yourself," was the answer. "The case which was placed in my hands consisted of a small oblong box, ten inches in length, by four in width, and about the same in depth. It was enclosed in brown paper; but in substance was far more solid. I could tell by the feel of it that it was formed either of wood or tin. I thought wood at the time, and that proved to be the case."

"Did you ascertain that at once?" Sir Noel asked.

"No," replied Tofts, "not for a quarter of an hour or more. I walked with the parcel in my hand, with some little curiosity as to its contents, but absorbed in reflections on other subjects. From first to last I suspected nothing. From first to last I regarded the thing I held simply as a parcel containing some article which I might have purchased, or which had been sent to me by a friend, and neither suspecting nor fearing treachery."

"And was there occasion to fear it?" asked the lawyer.

"Certainly."

"When did you ascertain this?"

"Too soon—far too soon. And I will be even with him, whoever it is. I will have my revenge. The murderous, sneaking, cowardly bound—I will have it. Trust me for that—I will have it. Dead or alive, I'll have it. Yes; dead or alive!"

Flimkid junior dipped his pen.

"In that case, my dear sir," he said, "you must really be calm. Excitement will knock you over, and if it knocks you over before we've got your statement down, there's awfully little chance of anybody avenging your wrongs. You were about to tell us how you detected some act of treachery. How was it?"

Tofts groaned with the pain of his singed and lacerated skin, and then proceeded.

"When I had gone some distance, and was on the point of returning, it somehow dawned upon my mind that there was something odd and curious in the manner of that carter's lad, something that I could not well understand. This led me to examine the parcel in my hands more closely. 'What is it?' I asked myself. The answer rose to my lips very promptly. 'Surely deeds or papers of some kind.' I thought; and there is no doubt now but that this was the very thought the parcel was intended to suggest to me."

"Why so?" the lawyer asked.

"Because I have recently lost documents of a valuable nature."

"And you had a momentary idea that these might have been restored to you?"

"Yes; because he was a boy, and I had a notion of 'Had you reason to suppose that they would be so restored?'

"Not by those who had surreptitiously gained possession of them; certainly not."

He turned his scarred and blackened face towards Sir Noel Edgecombe as he spoke, and noticed that Flora, standing in the shadow of the bed-curtains

with clasped hands, clearly understood the purport of his allusions.

"But," he continued, "I am not friendless. There are those who take an interest in me on account of my romantic fortunes, and who would not be backward to aid me. These would readily have restored the papers to my care had an opportunity presented itself, and I believed that some such stroke of good fortune had befallen me. I was deceived."

"You proceeded to an examination of the packet to satisfy your curiosity?"

"Yes."

"And what happened?"

"Availing myself of the shelter of a tree, because the rain was falling heavily, I first removed the paper covering."

"It had not writing upon it?"

"None, save my own name."

"In a hand familiar to you?"

"No."

"You are sure of that?"

"So far as the faint light enabled me to make out. As I have said, I removed the wrapper, and I threw it away. I had then before me an oblong deal box, with a lid, loosely fastened down with nails. They were small nails driven lightly in, and offered no obstacle. Taking out my penknife, I thrust it under the lid and raised it."

Sir Noel and Lady Edgecombe interposed a question in the same breath.

"What followed?" they exclaimed.

The distorted face grew yet more distorted, and it seemed as if the eyes of the wounded man leapt into sudden flame.

"You ask me?" he cried out; "you? What has ever happened to those who have stood in your path? What is the inevitable fate of those who have the misfortune to seek their rights in the teeth of those who have got possession of them? I am obnoxious to you, Sir Noel, and my lady. I know too much, I seek too much, and I am offensive to the dainty creature who calls you her parents. What had I to expect, then? What was the sure cost of my temerity in daring to remain under this roof? Why—death! You start with affected horror: but you know the truth. My removal would serve your every turn, and my removal you had resolved on. What happened, indeed? But I must tell you, Flimkid," he added, turning suddenly to the lawyer; "I must give you the fact as I should give it in a court of justice—as I shall give it there one day, if I live. Take down the simple fact, then, that no sooner had I raised the lid and dragged it open than there was a concussion—a shock—the instrument of death dropped in pieces from my hands, and I, falling upon the ground, lapsed into instant insensibility. From that moment, for long, long hours I was like a dead man, without memory or consciousness. So far the diabolical arts of my enemies had succeeded: beyond that they had failed. I had been injured: not destroyed."

As he ceased, Sir Noel rose from the chair he occupied by the bed-side.

"Dictate an oath to me," he said, abruptly, and with suppressed fury.

"For what purpose?" asked Tofts.

"An oath on which I may satisfy even you that your suspicions are groundless, and that I am innocent of this atrocious attempt upon your life."

The lips of the man upon the couch curled with scorn.

"I know of no oath on which I would believe a man whose simple word I would not take," he replied, bitterly.

"Be it so," returned the baronet, "and on my part I may venture to treat your insinuations with contempt."

"Father! father!" interposed Flora, in alarm.

"Oh, I do not fear him," replied the baronet, "and if I spare him the expression of my just indignation at this base calumny, it is because he is a sick man sharing the hospitality of my roof."

"Well put, Sir Noel," exclaimed Flimkid junior. "Besides, there is nothing to be got—except in a legal point of view—from an interchange of personalities. Allow me to suggest a more profitable employment of our time. The fragments of this pocket-mine, this torpedo, infernal machine, or whatever you choose to call it, are, I am told, in the next room. Let us make an examination of them."

Sir Noel objected.

"What good can come from looking at an exploded canister, or whatever it is?" he asked.

"Oh, if Sir Noel fears the examination," said Tofts.

"Fears! who dares talk to me of fearing? I have said, and I repeat, that I know nothing of this diabolical act, and I defy you to bring it home to me. Bring in the fragments."

The order was given to a servant, who obeyed it with slacrity.

Then the object of examination was submitted to a severe scrutiny. The remains of the deal case, only

the lid, one side, and the two ends, all hanging loosely together. Attached to one end was a portion of what had been a tin case, with an aperture in one side, through which a slow-match might have been passed. The other end had a piece of sand-paper glued to it. From one end of the lid, there stuck out several inches of wire, having a lucifer match hanging from a piece of string at the end of it. This was all.

It took Flimkid junior some time to examine these points, and still longer to arrange them in his mind so as to establish a rational connection between the different parts of the machine. But he did it at last.

"I have it," he suddenly burst out.

"Have what?" asked Tofts.

"The clue to the construction of the whole thing. See here, the tin case at one end of this box contained gunpowder: from it, a train of powder extended to the other end of the box, where you observe the sand-paper. Now, why sand-paper? Clearly enough, to produce a light by friction at the end of the gunpowder train. But how? You will see that, when the lid of the box is shut down, the piece of wire—it is a portion of an umbrella wire, by the way—passes down close to the sand-paper, and so as to rub against it. But sand-paper won't ignite umbrella-wire. Certainly not; but see what is left dangling at the end of that wire. A lucifer match, one of a dozen perhaps. They were no doubt tied firmly to the end of the wire, so that when the lid was down they pressed against the sand-paper. Now see the process: the lid is opened, in opening it causes the matches to rub against the sand-paper and to light, that fires the train, the train communicates with the bulk of the gunpowder in the tin can, and there is an explosion. A wondrously ingenious, isn't it? Had the case containing the powder been more firmly soldered together, it would have gone off like a shell; but the case was thin and badly joined, hence the result was comparatively innocuous."

"Comparatively!" moaned Tofts, "you wouldn't say so if you had lost your eyebrows, eyelashes, moustache, and half your hair off your head. If your skin was blackened and torn, your lips raw, and your hands swollen beyond all power of use. If your—your—"

"Never mind," cried Flimkid, "life is sweet."

"So is revenge," muttered Tofts.

"True, and this may lead you to it."

He pointed to the remains of the box.

"Not if you have the means of preventing it," said Tofts bitterly.

"You're awfully hard on a fellow," the lawyer said, smiling; "and why not if I have any power in the matter?"

"What's the use of beating about the bush?" cried the invalid, never at any time the most patient of men, and now stung by pain beyond all endurance. "Do you think I forget that you are his lawyer?"

"His? Who's?"

"Ridiculous! You know as well as I know, and as everyone here knows, that Sir Noel's the guilty man."

"Hush!" cried Flimkid. "It's actionable, and I know nothing of the sort. If I did, my being a lawyer would not prevent my acting like a man, and setting my face against such an infamous proceeding. But talking is of no use. Trust these things to my care; let us put them into the hands of a sharp officer, and have no fears for the result. Why, murder's been tracked home before now through a far slighter clue than a piece of umbrella-wire."

He straightened the piece before him with his fingers as he spoke, looking at it steadily the while, and as Tofts began to show signs of fatigue consequent upon the exertions he had made, the lawyer and the rest soon after quitted the room.

CHAPTER LXIX.

RUTH DREAMS TO SOME PURPOSE.

Trifles betray. A whisper will let loose
The avalanche: a flaw but like a hair
Destroys the sculptor's labours. So the work
Of secret guilt, however deitly wrought,
Yields to a breath—a nothing.

Don Carlos.

The story of the diabolical attempt on the life of Cheney Tofts was not long in getting a wide circulation. It was just one of those incidents, full of wonder and mystery, which every one delights to listen to and speculate about.

It produced an intense sensation in the servants' hall at the Manor House, and it was not long before, starting from that as a centre, it had spread itself over the country for miles round.

People repeated the tale "in confidence," and then in deep suggestive whispers put the question—Who was the wicked perpetrator of this infamous act?

The answer was in many cases merely a shrug of the shoulders or a turning up of the whites of the eyes, but this pantomime was full of meaning.

Sometimes people ventured a little further.

"Not Sir Noel?" they would ask.

"Oh, no!"

In a tone which might have ascertained "Oh, yes!"

"He is deeply interested in this man's death, isn't he?"

So the suggestive dialogue would go.

"Oh, yes. Of course—but—"

And the sudden break off might be taken to represent either the awe of the Manor House in which the speaker stood—for its favour was life to many living round it—or the degree of respect which the baronet had happened to inspire in that particular instance.

Among the rest, be sure that the lively, bright-eyed Ruth did not fail to drink in the details of this marvel; but, unlike others, she was silent over it. The story seemed to come upon her like a thunderclap. She listened, grew pale, then burst into tears, and hurried off to some secluded corner where she could indulge her feelings unrestrained.

What did this mean?

Had Gidley real grounds for his jealous apprehensions? Had this fickle coquette really lost her heart to the gentleman lover, Cheney Tofts?

Things more likely than this happened every day; but it had not happened in this particular case. Ruth's horror was not inspired by Tofts' danger, nor did her tears flow for his sufferings.

It was for Gidley that she was alarmed.

Yes. Upon those loving eyes of hers nothing that concerned the handsome keeper was lost. In spite of the estrangement between them, she read his face like a book, and watched his every movement with an interest that had its origin in fascination—in what we call love.

This being so, she had not failed to notice that for days past his looks had been cold and distraught, and his bearing that of an abstracted man, while he had spent hours and hours in the solitude of the woods.

That morning his face had brightened.

That morning, as she saw him issue forth in quest of the doctor, and mount his horse, and ride slowly off, his eyes had glittered with a peculiar light, and she noticed that his lips moved in low muttering, while he grasped the reins and whip with a savage fierceness.

"What did this mean?"

Like an arrow, that question shot through her heart.

"He has been moody and desperate. Love for me and jealousy of this man have driven him to the verge of distraction. Has it all proved too much for him? Has he yielded to the impulse of revenge? Oh, merciful heaven, has he been wicked enough to try and take away this man's life?"

It may be pleasant to flirt—it is pleasant to some charming but inconsiderate people—but that is not an enviable moment when the flirt awakes to the knowledge that her coquetry may have goaded on one of its victims to attempt the life of another.

Yet that was this weak, vain, but not bad-hearted girl's position.

"Oh, if the gentleman should die, and Gidley should be—should be punished for it," she sobbed aloud. "I could never, never forgive myself!"

To go to Gidley and entreat his confidence was the first step that occurred to her impulsive heart; but he was absent in search of the doctor he failed to find—had been so too long to agree with any idea of his innocence. It might be hours before he returned, and if he came he might treat her prayers with contempt, her pleadings with scorn, her bitter, bitter tears with withering ridicule. Besides, the more she thought of it the more improbable it was that he should admit anything which would tend to criminate himself, and bring down on his head the punishment due to his wickedness.

Absorbed in these thoughts and misgivings, Ruth flung herself upon the bed in her room, to which she had retired, and burying her head in the clothes to shut out the daylight, which seemed hateful to her—the depressing light of a wet day—gave herself up to despairing and remorseful reflections. Seen in regard to the misery it might cause, her conduct seemed to be heartless and wicked; and yet she could not help pleading in extenuation that she meant no harm. She would not have injured Gidley for the world, and as little would she have been guilty of conduct unbecoming a woman. She might flirt with a gentleman, and experience a thrill of delight at his compliments and attentions, but only in a gay, light-hearted spirit of fun, and for the amusement of seeing her lover jealous.

There was little harm in this, she had always thought. Other high-spirited girls did it, and nothing serious came of it all. But now she was to learn that it is dangerous to play with fire—that the affection of a true, devoted, manly bosom is not a thing to be trifled with and made light of. It was a bitter lesson, but a wholesome one; and in her wretchedness she

made a solemn promise to herself that if Gidley once got out of this trouble she would beg his forgiveness, be reconciled to him on any terms (she had still faith in her powers of fascination so far), and never, never anger him again to the latest day of her life.

The gloomy day wore on. The dull light grew more and more sombre. The rain fell with a dull monotonous drizzle on the leaves without. An autumn wind moaned among the trees. All was so dull, so depressing, within and without.

Yielding to the influence of the hour, it was little surprising that Ruth, with her head buried in the clothes of the bed, should have passed from a state of consciousness to one of somnolence!

Overcome with weariness, she dozed; but so lightly that her mind was still cognizant of outward effects. She heard the falling rain and the moaning wind, and the details of the story about the murderous exploding engine were sufficiently vivid in her memory for her to connect them with her fears and apprehensions respecting Gidley.

These incidents blending together, naturally shaped themselves into a dream.

She was walking with her lover in the woods. It rained heavily and the winds howled; but she did not care. They were reconciled and she happy, leaning on his arm and looking up into his handsome face. Suddenly the rain came down more fiercely than ever, and then she noticed for the first time that Gidley carried an umbrella by his side. In a playful tone she bantered him on having forgotten it, and entreated that he would shelter her with it. To her horror, his face changed, his eyes flashed fire, and in a voice of thunder he bade her be silent. She could not understand how she had offended, and promised to obey, but still entreated him to shelter her as she was getting wet to the skin. Sullenly, brutally, he refused; but she threw herself on her knees among the wet leaves, and prayed to him to comply. He assented. The umbrella was opened and held over her head, but in vain. The wires which should have supported it were gone, and it fell cold and wet about her face. She put up her hands instinctively to push it away, and they became wet. She looked at them—they were red. The umbrella was dripping blood.

With a loud and prolonged shriek of horror, she started up and awoke.

Her first thought was as to the interpretation to be put on this strange vision.

The printed interpreter was there, lying on the table by the bedside, and going to the window she eagerly turned over its pages, in the dull, grey light. Not a word there concerning umbrellas! It was a terrible oversight on the part of the illustrious author; but there was not a word!

But Ruth's firm faith in the significance of dreams and visions was not to be shaken by such a trifl. She believed that she had fallen asleep for the express purpose of receiving a revelation from the world of sleep, and that her strange vision must have some dread import.

So she sat down on the bedside to think. She sat there turning over and over in her mind every point in which it was possible that this vision might have a bearing upon the great trouble in which she was overwhelmed; but for a long time all her cogitations were fruitless.

At length, on a sudden, the clue flashed across her like a gleam of light.

She remembered the construction of the exploding machine—the box, the tin case and sand-paper, and the wire which was to act upon it. The wire! That was the point. It had been mentioned quite incidentally, quite as an unimportant detail, that this had formed a portion of an umbrella, from which it had been violently wrench.

Here was the connecting link.

The umbrella in her dream was without the wires that should have supported it. Gidley had only revealed that fact on her imploring him to do so, and when he did, she for the first time discovered that there had been bloodshed.

What could be clearer than that this pointed out Gidley as the constructor of the murderous exploding machine?

Finally convinced of this, Ruth clasped her hands in agony.

"He is guilty! He is guilty!" she ejaculated, in a transport of despair.

And for a while she gave herself up to the torture of this conviction. Then it occurred to her that it might be possible to put the reality of her suspicions to the proof. Not that she had any misgivings; she was too confirmed a dreamer for that; but there was a morbid satisfaction in seeking confirmation.

Besides—and this determined her—she might be able to save Gidley by destroying one proof of his guilt.

With this impression, she stole out of her own room, and descended by way of the servants' stair-

case. Gidley's rooms were, like those of the herdsmen, the bailiffs, and the rest of the keepers, in a building in the rear, and detached from the Manor House, but adjoining the stables. Ruth knew the place well, and stealing out, she crossed to it, and found her way to Gidley's door. It was open. The room had an empty, desolate aspect that gloomy afternoon that made Ruth shudder: it was the room of a man who was unhappy, and had grown reckless and indifferent to personal comforts.

Looking hurriedly round to see that she was not watched, Ruth darted to a corner in which the keeper kept his walking-sticks, an old cavalry sword, a life preserver, and a couple of umbrellas. One of the latter, a new one, was carefully rolled and fastened up. The other, well worn and stained, had been hastily thrown where it stood.

With a trembling hand Ruth seized this latter, and dashed it open.

One of the wires was missing!

It had been violently wrench.

Ruth dropped it with a groan of anguish.

"He is guilty! He is guilty—guilty!"

The words were yet on her lips when a quick foot sounded without, and some one burst into the room.

"What are you doing here, woman?" demanded an angry, hoarse voice.

Ruth turned with a cry, and a sensation as of swooning. She could not speak.

It was Gidley who confronted her.

CHAPTER LXX.

THE BLACK SWAN.

Sense of revenge, the powerless will
Still baffled and yet burning still.

Coleridge.

Up to this time Doriani had not returned to his Spanish dwelling, or to the miserable little beauty, his wife, who occupied it.

He was, in fact, still at Nestleborough.

Having accompanied the woman Lola to her home, as already narrated, and having been refused admission, as on a former occasion, he had resolved on remaining in the town, and this for several reasons.

One was that in his then state of mind, with the fury of a senseless and raging jealousy blinding him to all pity and consideration, and hardly leaving him master of himself, he dared not return home.

Home! The bitter, the hollow mockery of that word!

It rang in his ears like the knell of a life's happiness.

Then, there was the consideration of the mystery connected with this woman Lola. Something might be heard in the town of the wandering lunatic, in whose fate she was so interested. And if not, something might at least be found out of the secret she guarded so carefully from observation in her closely-watched dwelling.

So, all things considered, the doctor determined to remain at Nestleborough.

It would have been a natural thing for him to go to the principal inn—that at which Claudia Guilder had died—but he did not. He was too well known there. His conduct would be too liable to observation. He, therefore, sought out a house as close as possible to that occupied by the woman Lola.

The house was known by the sign of the Black Swan.

A very humble place of entertainment, with a few beds, and a private sitting-room or two for the accommodation of anglers, who stayed in the place with an eye to the fine trout in the river. One of the bed-rooms and one of the sitting-rooms Doriani secured, and shutting himself up from observation, passed some hours there as miserable as a man might well be.

By turns he raged and raved, shed tears, and bemoaned his fate like a boy. As with all men of excitable temperament, so with him—there was no consistency in his anguish. It ranged from acute frenzy to dull despair.

At last, the solitude and the preying of his own miseries became intolerable. He determined to descend into the public-room, or to go forth into the open air.

The stairs of the house were so arranged that they led down not into a passage, but into the room open to all. They were dark and gloomy, with a door at the bottom, over which was an open fanlight.

As the doctor stole down, it was possible for him to hear all that passed in the way of conversation in the room below, and what he did hear was of a nature to arrest his attention.

Two men were speaking—two common men, as he could tell by the sound of their voices.

"That were he, for all that, Jim," said one of 'em.

"Who were who?" demanded the other.

"The gov'n'r's son," said one of 'em.

"What he up at the station?"

"Ay!"

"But he gave his card, didn't he?"

"Give it? Oh, ay, he give it fast enough. 'Taint so difficult to give a card, or to get a card to give, for the matter o' that. But his name's no more Bal—what's the name?—Balol Edgecombe, than mine is. Mark that, Jim!"

"Oh, I don't know! Don't ask me nothin' about it," responded the imperturbable Jim.

"But, I tell you, I knowed him. I'd swear to him anywheres. His name is John Harwood—that's what his name is."

(To be continued.)

BRITOMARTE, THE MAN-HATER.

By E. D. E. N. SOUTHWORTH,
Author of "Self-Made," "All Alone," &c., &c.

CHAPTER VII.

Oh, she is a golden girl!

But a man, a man should woo her,

While they that seek her shrink aside,

When they should like storme pursue her.

Barry Cornwall.

ERMINIE found the company in the act of adjourning to a spacious dining-room, where a sumptuous repast had been set forth for the refreshment of the visitors.

"You have not found your friend?" inquired Justin.

"No."

"I am sorry; for I wish to be presented to her."

"Ah, well, very likely she has wandered off alone for a solitary walk by the river, or through the woods. You will be sure to see her at the school-ball this evening. Your clerical character will not prevent you from being present at a school-ball?"

"No, certainly not," replied Justin.

"And now, what can I help you to, my Minie?" inquired the doctor, as they approached the table around which the visitors were crowding.

When the collation was over, all the visitors departed except those who had received special invitations to the ball of the evening.

And these retired to the dressing-rooms that had been prepared for them to make some change in their toilet.

Erminie went to the dormitory that she occupied in company with her three friends—Britomarte, Elfrida, and Alberta.

This dormitory was a square room with two windows overlooking the river.

It was fitted up with four little white beds, four little washstands with little glasses hung over them, and four chairs.

Each girl was standing before her glass, busy with her evening toilet.

On entering the dormitory, Erminie went up at once to the side of her friend, kissed her quietly, and whispered:

"Oh, Britomarte, you have made me so happy!"

"In what manner, darling?" inquired Miss Conyers, letting her magnificent dark hair drop from her hands as she turned to clasp the waist of her favourite.

"Oh, by your glorious success to day! Your essay was the whole subject of conversation, both in the drawing-room and in the refreshment saloon. And you were not there to hear it! But it made me so proud!"

"I am gladder that it should have given you pleasure than of any other circumstance connected with it, darling!"

"Oh, I know it! And my brother, Britomarte! He appreciated it. I could not say more for his taste or for your essay than that. He paid it the greatest compliment of any."

"Your brother's mere appreciation must have been a great compliment, my pet," said Miss Conyers, with a dubious smile.

"Ah! you mean in my estimation. Well, it was. But you shall hear what he said—That it was the most original, out-spoken and morally courageous assertion of right against might that has ever been made."

"I am glad he likes it; I hope he will remember it; and as—being a man—he is one of the voters and law-makers of the nation, I hope he will act upon it."

"Ah, my dearest, don't speak with that bitterness just now, when we are so happy. I have something for you here; a little offering from myself in honour of your success; it is but a trifle; but you will wear it for my sake. Give me your finger, dear," said Erminie, taking the hand of her idol and slipping upon her middle finger a beautiful opal ring.

"Wear it for your sake? Of course I will, my precious darling. I would wear it for your sake if it were the simplest circlet ever carved from wood or bone; but this is a gem! This is one of the richest opals I ever saw," said Britomarte, repaying her enthusiastic friend with a kiss.

As it was growing late, the young ladies made haste to complete their toilet. They were all soon ready, and presented a fine effect in the contrast of their different styles.

Britomarte was brilliantly beautiful in a dark star-spangled robe; like some queen of night she looked. Erminie was blooming as a blush rose in a rose-organie. Elfrida seemed rather too much like a little blaze in a flame-coloured berège. Alberta, in a light blue embroidered crêpe, looked the very fashionable and aristocratic young lady that she was.

They were all ready to go down, when Erminie, who, as the last to begin, was also the last to finish her toilet, turned round. And as she did so, Elfrida uttered an exclamation of dismay.

"Why what in the world is the matter?" inquired Alberta.

"Oh! don't you see? Look at Erminie's brooch!"

"Well! it is my father's miniature," said Erminie, in surprise at the dismay displayed in Elfrida's manner.

"But it is set with—opals!" gasped Elfrida, in consternation.

"Oh! so it is!" exclaimed Alberta, in a sort of restrained terror.

"Well, what of it? They form a very beautiful setting," said Britomarte.

"But oh! don't you know—don't you know—that opals are always fatal to the wearer?" whispered Elfrida.

"It is an old eastern superstition. I trust, wherever we are in the world's progress, we are too far advanced to go back to those ancient follies," said Britomarte.

"Oh, yes; it is easy to call it an old eastern superstition; but 'there are more things in heaven and earth,' you know, 'than are dreamt of in our philosophy.' And those old eastern seers were deeply versed in all the hidden mysteries of nature. And certainly history and experience have both proved that the belief in the opal being fatal to the wearer is something more than an old eastern superstition. Did you never hear that the opal was fatal to the wearer, Erminie?" inquired Elfrida, turning to the minister's daughter.

"Oh, yes, yes; but I had forgotten it. Perhaps I never thought it; and then these are so beautiful! and they encircle my father's miniature; and they were given to me by him," faltered Erminie, turning pale.

"How can you torture that sensitive girl with such cruel folly, Elfrida? Do not mind her, Erminie," said Britomarte.

"Folly! Look at history and experience. Marie Antoinette wore opals on her bridal dress; and she was the most unfortunate bride and queen that ever lived, except Anne Boleyn, who wore an opal necklace at the altar around that 'slender neck' that the axe was destined to sever."

"They would have met the same fate had they worn diamonds, rubies, sapphires, amethysts, or emeralds."

"And then there was Mary Stuart and her stomacher of opals."

"She perished from other causes than her love of those innocent gems, I think."

"And there was Cesare Borgia's opal seal ring, which was death to any one whose hand he clasped."

"Because under that seal was a secret coil of deadly poison, like the adder's sack of venom, and a secret spring, like the adder's fang, to inject death into the veins of the victim. I am astonished at you, Elfrida, to seek in superstition an explanation of things that have the most evident causes in nature."

"Well, Britomarte, you may talk as you like, but you must admit that it is very remarkable the opal should have figured in every one of these fatal cases I have named; and in scores of other cases that I could name, from history and from experience," persisted Elfrida.

"The opal always present? Well, so also was gold, and other precious metals and stones. How illogical you are, Elfrida!"

"Britomarte, in my own family history I knew a case in which the opal was fatal to the wearer. And if you have been so fortunate as to know no such case in yours?"

"Hush!" cried a voice so sharply and suddenly that the hearers knew not whence it came; but all instinctively looked at Britomarte, who had suddenly become white as marble, but who, finding herself an object of general attention, rallied, recovered her composure, and exclaimed:

"It is time to have done with this nonsense, and to go down. Come, Erminie!"

And she drew her favourite's arm within her own, and led the way downstairs.

"Britomarte, dear Britomarte, you are wearing an opal too! And I put it on your finger," whispered Elfrida.

"Where I will wear it as long as I live, having

more faith in your love than in all the superstitions of all ages."

"But if it brings you woe! Oh, Britomarte, I—who would die to make you happy—I should never survive having given you a fatal talisman," said Erminie, raising her soft hazel eyes, full of tenderness, to the face of her friend.

"What a notable blessing it is that those eyes of yours, that look up at me with such tenderness in their soft, bright depths, are not the eyes of a man! My man-hated might be in some danger of modification," laughed Britomarte, as they reached the folding-doors of the ball-room.

Here a separation of the friends took place. The Rev. Mr. Hutchinson, the principal English master of the college, came forward, and taking Miss Conyers on his arm, led her into the saloon, but not before she had looked back, and had seen that Erminie also was taken in charge by one of the masters.

The ball-room was the most spacious hall in the building.

It was beautifully decorated with evergreens and blooming flowers, and brilliantly lighted by hundreds of wax candles in lieu of gas, and filled with a gay and fashionable company.

At the farther end a band of music, placed in an elevated gallery, performed one of Beethoven's finest overtures.

Mr. Hutchinson led his charge to a seat on one of the long crimson-cushioned benches placed against the wall, and then, with a bow, left her to herself.

The seat upon which Britomarte rested, being elevated some feet above the level of the floor, enabled her to see over the heads of the crowd that filled the middle of the room.

She saw Alberta seated with her stately parents, opposite to herself, across the room.

Then she perceived Elfrida standing in the middle of a group composed of her "pa and two uncles," and some of their country neighbours.

Next she saw Erminie, on the arm of a tall, portly, grey-haired gentleman, dressed in clerical black, whom she easily recognized as her favourite's father.

Old as the minister certainly was, he was yet unquestionably the most manly-looking man in the assembly.

There was not another one present worthy of a second glance!

At least, so thought Britomarte, as with misprizing eyes and mocking lips, her regards wandered over the assembly, to return and rest upon the face and form of Erminie's father.

"In his day and generation there may have been men worth looking at and caring for, but they are gone," she murmured to herself.

Even while she thought thus, her roving eye was arrested by the appearance of a gentleman who just then entered the room, and who, against her will, held her attention spell-bound.

Not as Juliet, did she "look to love," but looked—since look she must—to hate. What right had one of the natural enemy to arrest her eyes and fix her attention upon himself?

Yet this man, who all unconsciously challenged the regards of the brilliant amazon, was really well worthy even of her proud notice.

He was taller than any other man in the assembly—half a head taller than even the kingly-looking old Lutheran minister; but then his proportions were so fine, his presence so stately, his motions so graceful, and his manner so gracious, that no one could object to the extra inches in his altitude.

His head and face were of almost ideal beauty; the head well set, the face lighted up by a pair of eloquent dark hazel eyes, and framed by a thick mass of closely-curling dark auburn hair and beard.

With the steadily moving glance of a prince he looked over the assembly, as though in search of some one he desired to see.

He looked until his eyes rested on the lovely form of Erminie, leaning upon her father's arm.

Then his whole countenance beamed with a warm and beautiful smile, and he immediately made his way to the side of the old minister and his daughter.

Why did a strange pang shoot through the bosom of Britomarte as she whispered to herself:

"I suppose he is some acquaintance of Dr. Rosenthal's and some suitor of Erminie's! Yes! and likely to be a very successful one, I should imagine, from the manner in which she receives him!" she added, as she watched the smiles that flitted over her favourite's blooming face, while the stranger spoke to her.

Erminie seemed indeed to be eagerly and delightedly assenting to everything he said.

Presently, with a glad nod and smile and blush, Erminie slipped her arm through that of the stranger, and they began to thread their way through the crowd and towards her—Britomarte.

In a few more moments they stood before her, Erminie blushing and smiling and murmuring:

"My dearest Britomarte, this is my brother, Justin. Miss Conyers, Mr. Rosenthal."

Britomarte slightly bent her proud head in acknowledgment of the deep bow from Justin Rosenthal. And then, as both looked up, their eyes met.

Now why should there have been in Britomarte's brilliant dark grey orbs that expression of anxiety, inquiry and defiance? Or in Justin's eloquent dark hazel eyes that firm, gentle, conquering strength that thrilled, enraged and subdued the beautiful man-hater? Who can tell?

These phenomena belong to the deepest mysteries of our nature.

In a few minutes Justin Rosenthal had established himself by the side of the brilliant amazon, talking to her and drawing her out to talk, as not one of his sex had ever been permitted to do before!

And as he spoke or listened, he kept those wonderful eyes fixed on hers—not rudely, nor boldly nor offensively, but tenderly, reverentially, protectingly, with a gaze that still thrilled, enraged and subdued her, and still compelled her to lift her eyes to meet it.

Meanwhile the overture was finished, dance music commenced, and quadrilles were formed.

The Signor Vittorio Corsoni, the elegant young professor of Italian, came up to solicit the honour of Miss Conyer's hand for the first quadrille.

But she answered, "No, thank you," very shortly, and without even turning to look at the applicant, for she was attentively listening to something that Justin Rosenthal was saying upon one of the great public questions of the day.

Vittorio bowed, walked off with his mortification, and was soon after seen leading out Miss Goldsborough to the head of a set that was forming.

And Britomarte, who had almost ceased to speak in the interest with which she listened, still gave her whole attention to the words of Justin Rosenthal.

Elfrida Fielding was carried off by Albert Goldsborough, a tall, fair young man, cousin to Alberta, whom it was the dearest wish of her parents that the heiress should marry.

A gentleman came up and led away Erminie, who bowed to Britomarte before leaving her side, where she had long sat an unheeded dummy, watching in delight the growing acquaintance between her brother and her friend, the two greatest idols of her heart.

Britomarte scarcely even noticed her favourite's parting bow, for she was listening to something very original that Justin was saying, while his eyes, fastened upon hers, held them motionless.

All her young companions were now dancing. No one was sitting still except clergymen, teachers, and elderly people.

Britomarte, who was known to dance well and to be fond of dancing, as it was natural that a young girl of her grace and beauty should be, received frequent solicitations to join the quadrilles.

But to all aspirants for the honour of her hand, she answered curtly and without turning her head:

"No, thank you," for she was still under the power of the eyes and voice of Justin Rosenthal.

You may be assured that this little drama on the crimson-cushioned bench did not pass unnoticed, even by the busiest of the dancers.

Erminie glanced at them from time to time, with pleasure lighting up her soft eyes, as she said to herself:

"I am so glad they like each other. Two such intellectual people should do so! Only I hope Justin will not fall in love with her, for if he were to do so it would be with all his heart and for all his life; while she—oh! how she would hate him for thinking of her in that way!"

Elfrida saw it, and found an opportunity of saying to Erminie, as she passed her in the dance:

"I think you might have introduced your handsome brother to some of the rest of us, and not delivered him over to the tender mercies of the man-hater. He might as well be monopolized by a man-eater."

Alberta, resting beside her parents, observed it, and feeling her own fair self slighted by the neglect of the handsomest man in the room, threw up her pretty head and indulged in a sneer, addressed to her mamma:

"There is consistency! Britomarte always professed to abjure the society of gentlemen, and now look at that! If that is not a flirtation I would like to know what is!"

"It is something far more serious than a flirtation, and Miss Conyers is quite right. Mr. Rosenthal is a rising man—in every way a highly eligible match for a young lady in her position, and she will do well to marry him; for the sooner Britomarte Conyers changes her name and places herself under the legal protection of a husband the better," said Mrs. Goldsborough, a tall, fair, stately lady, who had once been a beautiful blonde, like her daughter was now, but whose present appearance suggested what her daughter's might be twenty years hence.

"Yes, yes, yes, yes," agreed Mr. Goldsborough—a short, stout, bald-headed, pompous old gentleman, who mistook repetition for emphasis. "Yes, the sooner Britomarte Conyers changes her present name for that of any respectable man she can induce to marry her the better. Yes."

Erminie, standing near, could not avoid over-hearing these remarks.

"Good heaven!" she exclaimed, within herself, "to hear such things said of that queenly Britomarte, who would not barter her maiden liberty for the crown matrimonial, though a king laid it at her feet! What can be that secret of her life known to these people! Whatever it may be, Britomarte herself is blameless—that I would stake my life upon!"

And all this time the object of all this talk remained quite unconscious that she was the subject of such general conversation. She was listening to the discourse of Justin Rosenthal, which indeed was more worthy of her attention than anything said by anybody else in that assembly.

At length there was a general movement through the hall. The guests were going to supper; but Britomarte, still spell-bound by the eye, and voice, and mind of Justin Rosenthal, knew nothing of this exodus until he ceased speaking, arose and offered her his arm, saying:

"Will you allow me to take you to the supper-room?"

"Thanks!" murmured Britomarte, in a tone of voice gentler than she had ever used to any living being, except Erminie.

As she arose and descended from her seat, he took her hand and drew it through his arm until it rested lightly on his wrist. And at that touch, so respectful and yet so compelling, a strange, sweet thrill trembled along her nerves and troubled her heart as with the revelation of some new life; and the beautiful man-hater, enraged at this discovery, withdrew her arm from its resting-place.

But those eloquent dark hazel eyes were bent on hers directly, with a look of questioning.

"It was only my glove," faltered Britomarte, fingering at the fastenings of her white kids. And she suffered him, with a smile, to draw her hand back to its resting-place, and so to lead her to the supper-room.

Did you ever clasp a bird and feel it fluttering vainly in your hand? So fluttered the strong, proud will of Britomarte Conyers in the grasp of that power which subdues and rules the universe—love.

The supper was over, the ball was over, and the guests were in the cloak-room, putting on their wraps and waiting for the carriages that were to take them away.

Later than all the rest, lingering at the ball-room door, stood Justin Rosenthal, bending over Britomarte Conyers, holding her hand and speaking to her in a low voice. Her eyes were not raised to his now, they were fixed upon the floor; but she let her hand remain clasped in his while she listened to his words.

"Come, Justin! Justin, my son, where are you? We are waiting for you!"

It was the voice of his father calling him.

"Good night!" murmured Justin Rosenthal, bowing over the hand that he ventured not yet to lift to his lips; and he released it and turned away to join his party.

"Good night!"

It was but a word—a very ordinary word—heard every evening wherever the English language is spoken.

But how much was expressed in it now. How eloquent was it, spoken by his lips to her ears. It was much more than a good-night; it was a declaration, a promise, a prayer and a benediction.

She upon whom it had descended remained standing motionless and in deep thought for a few moments, and then, with a sudden start and an angry gesture, she shook off the spell and hurried to her dormitory.

Justin Rosenthal went to the cloak-room, from which all had departed except his father and sister, who were only waiting for him. They were therefore tête-à-tête.

"Is Erminie going with us to-night?" he inquired.

"No; the hotel at Bellemont, where we shall sleep, is not a pleasant place for a young lady to rest at. Besides, she wants to pass one more night with her school-friends here, who will not go home until to-morrow—and especially, I suppose, with Miss Conyers. Ah! by the way—Miss Conyers! You seemed to be wonderfully attracted to that brilliant young Donna Quixota," said Dr. Rosenthal.

"I was," answered Justin, frankly.

"Why, Justin, she is a monomaniac, an abolitionist—a woman's-rights woman!"

"So much the better! for they show an active, earnest, independent mind. She will outgrow all the crudities, correct all the evil, and confirm all the good in her nature," said Justin.

"She is all wrong—all wrong!"

"She is quite worth setting right."

"Ha! ha! ha! Who will undertake to do that?"

"I will!"

"I wish you joy of your undertaking. Why, she's as mad as a March hare!"

"Father, with all her idiosyncrasies, she is the very truest, noblest, and most loving soul I ever met, either in man or woman, in the whole course of my life."

"Loving?—Why, Britomarte Conyers hates all man-kind!"

"Nay, but she loves the whole human race with such entire, earnest, active devotion, that she hates and wars with the wrongs and despots that make them miserable. I have talked with her five hours; and I know her as thoroughly as if I lived with her five years."

"You are in love with her, my fine fellow."

"No, not yet; for love is not with me the growth of an evening, though esteem, admiration, and appreciation may be. But I know that I shall love her with all the devotion of my heart and life, and I mean to marry her."

"Justin!" exclaimed his father and sister in a breath.

"Yes, I am fully resolved to make Britomarte Conyers my wife; for I do not believe that there is her counterpart on earth."

"But I think that you had better find out whether you can get her before you make so positive an assertion," said Erminie.

"But I am determined to have her," said Justin.

"With her consent, if you can win it. But she may say 'no.' Indeed, I am sure she will say 'no.'"

"Ah! but I shall not take 'no' for an answer. I—will—have—Britomarte Conyers," repeated Justin, slowly and emphatically.

"A sudden and a rash resolution," said Dr. Rosenthal, as he and his son entered their hired carriage, after bidding good-night to Erminie.

And rash as well as sudden it would have been in almost any other man except Justin Rosenthal.

But with his quick insight into character, correct judgment of the fitness of things, and promptness of decision and of action, his resolution had all the wisdom of mature deliberation, as well as all the spirit of bold adventure.

Now I do not wish to be Germanic and mystical, so I will say nothing of the unity of souls in duality of form and sex, nor of "elective affinity"; but I will insist that there is such a thing as mutual first love at first sight between man and woman, which is as lasting as life.

CHAPTER VIII.

Disdain and scorn ride sparkling in her eyes,
Misprizing what they look on; and her wit
Values itself so highly that to her
All matter else seems weak.

Shakespeare.

WHEN Britomarte Conyers had impatiently shaken off the spell with which Justin Rosenthal's gaze and tone and touch had bound her, she hurried upstairs into the dormitory appropriated to herself and her four companions.

But she found Elfrida Fielding and Alberta Goldsborough its only occupants. They were standing before their glasses, combing out their hair for the night.

Britomarte entered hastily, seated herself before her own mirror and began to loosen her long dark locks.

Elfrida wheeled round upon her, saying:

"You are thinking so much of your handsome conquest that you haven't a word to say, Britty!"

"My handsome conquest?" echoed Miss Conyers, superciliously raising her eyebrows.

"Yes; and he is handsome too! Whenever I looked at that proud form and face of his I thought of Sir Walter Scott's description of King James the Fourth, —it was so appropriate:

"The monarch's form was noble size,

"For feats of strength or exercise,

"Shaped in proportion fair;

"And hazel was his eagle eye,

"And auburn of the darkest dye,

"His short curled beard and hair,

"And oh, he had that earnest gaze,

"That sedom lady's heart resists."

"You are poetically inclined," said Miss Conyers sarcastically.

"I have an affinity for the poetical," returned Elfrida.

"But I doubt whether you quote correctly."

"Whether or not, the lines suit your conquest to a nicety."

"My 'conquest' again! I beg, Elfrida, you will not talk nonsense in connection with my name," said Miss Conyers, haughtily erecting her head.

"How mad we are!" cried Elfrida, stretching her eyes.

"Well! he was your conquest, and your conqueror too, for aught I know. These things are sometimes

mutual, even between a man-hater and a—lady-killer! And I'm sure it looked like it. What do you think, Alberta?"

"I do not know. Is the young man an eligible party? Theological students are not apt to be so, I know," calmly replied Miss Goldsborough.

"Young ladies," said Miss Conyers, turning around and assuming all her dignity—and much of dignity she had—"if you will continue this conversation, I must insist that you leave my name entirely out of it. You are perfectly well aware of my distaste of such subjects."

"There, now we've made her angry in earnest! And all on account of that hero of the 'eagle eye' and close-curled hair and beard. I beg your pardon, Britomarte, but I can't help it! Oh, I know I shall go to sleep to-night and wake up to-morrow morning, repeating:

"And hazel was his eagle eye,
And suburn of the darkest dye
His short curled beard and hair

Oh, I say, Britomarte, if you really mean to throw him over, shrug him in my direction, will you? and I'll try and break his fall. I have an affinity with the unfortunate, especially when 'hazel is his eagle eye,' et cetera."

So prattling on with her railing, Elfrida retired to rest.

Alberta soon followed her example.

And Britomarte, disdaining further notice of her companion's levity, retired also, leaving the light burning for Erminie.

In a few moments, Britomarte ascertained by the regular respiration of her two companions that they were both asleep: for in the deep stillness of the dormitory even those soft sounds were audible to the fine sense of the wakeful girl.

Yes, Britomarte was wakeful; for though she lay motionless, she could not compose herself to sleep, and though she closed her eyes, she could not shut out the haunting vision of an earnest, manly face, framed in short curled 'auburn hair and beard, and lighted by dark hazel eyes, so steadfast in their look that they seemed to be looking into her very soul, and revealing to her that there is something in human life sweeter, deeper, holier than all her intellect had yet discovered.

In vain she tried to banish this alluring vision.

It would not depart from her. It entered her soul and took possession, and would not be dislodged even by her queenly will.

"I shall hate this man! He is a forward, arrogant, intrusive egotist, with all his attractions, and I shall detest him even more than I do all his sex!" she said to herself.

But she felt within herself that she did not and could not hate him; that she liked him, and liked all creatures better for his sake; and that he was worthy of all her best regard.

"This, I suppose, is what my sentimental school friends would call falling in love. And nature seems to have given me no more immunity from that mortal malady of the mind, than she has from measles, or any other malady of the body. I will endure the humiliation with what self-respect I can summon, and struggle with the weakness until I throw it off," she continued.

And having made this frank confession and formed this stern resolution, she felt relieved and strengthened.

And she turned over and addressed herself to sleep, and fell into a sweet reverie, in which she once more saw those eloquent eyes, heard those earnest tones, and felt the thrilling clasp of that soft, firm hand.

"Britomarte, dearest, are you awake?"

It was the low, sweet voice of Erminie that spoke close to her ear.

"Yes, darling," replied Miss Conyers, opening her eyes.

"As this is our last night, dear Britomarte, will you let me draw my little bed close to yours, so that we can talk, without waking the other girls?"

"Certainly."

Cautiously and quietly Erminie accomplished her task.

And then she whispered softly:

"Britomarte, how do you like my brother?"

As Britomarte hesitated to reply, her friend put the question in another form:

"What do you think of my brother, Britomarte?"

"I think him very handsome, my dear, and that you are very like him—as like as a young girl can be to a mature man—"a softened image of himself," as the poets say. You have his hair and eyes and tones, Erminie—much softened," replied the beauty, speaking as calmly as if she had been criticizing a picture.

"Oh! and who knows but your liking for me may have been a foreshadowing," said Erminie in a subdued, delighted tone.

As Miss Conyers did not reply to this observation, and might not even have heard it, Erminie spoke again:

"I was not referring to his personal appearance, dear Britomarte, but to something much higher—to his moral and intellectual character, and the impression they might have produced on you."

"Well, darling, I cannot say more or less of him than this, that, taken altogether, he impressed me as being—"

"Yes—what?"

"A man!"

"Oh, Britomarte!—only that? And of course you hate him?"

"My pet, as he is your brother, I would rather not hate him; but in order to avoid doing so, I must beg leave to be permitted to forget him. Let us talk of something else. Who was that aristocratic-looking man with whom you danced so often?"

"Oh, you noticed him?" exclaimed Erminie, with a sudden gasp, that had a timid blush in its very sound.

"I notice everything that passes before me, and concerns you, my darling."

"Ah, dear Britomarte, how good you are to care so much for me. Hush! I will tell you who he is—listen. I must speak low, for it is a profound secret as yet; but I will have no concealments from you."

"I think that it is as well you should not... As you have no near female relative, you could not find a safer confidante than I should be. But what secret is this that I am to hear? Is it that the man is a favourite suitor of yours?"

"Oh, Britomarte! the idea of such a being as he is thinking of me!" exclaimed Erminie, in a timid whisper.

"Indeed, he seemed to think of you; but it might have been all seeming. You do well to doubt him," said Britomarte.

"Oh! I do not doubt him. He is even better than he seems—greater than he seems—much too good and great to think of me!" replied Erminie in a low, hushed voice.

"Indeed! Who is the exalted creature? Is he a prince in disguise? or 'Bodkins, Banker,' Chairman of the Universal Explosion Prevention Company?"

"Don't be sarcastic, Britty, dear. Hush! he is a celebrated—I may almost say an illustrious—military officer, who has been lionized in the highest circles of Europe, but now travelling incog.; indeed, he really is though nobody knows it, except my father's party, with whom he came here."

"To think what a fuss Madame Bellemont and all her suite would have made over him if she had known it!"

"Yes; that is just precisely what he wished to avoid, and why he came incog. What are you laughing at?"

"To think, besides, how completely he was overlooked, even at a school-ball, when he presented himself only upon his intrinsic merits. No one except your father and yourself took the slightest notice of him."

"I tell you that such was his desire. He has been lionized to weariness. He is fatigued with adulation. And therefore he comes here incog., to elude notice. But do not doubt, Britomarte, that if he would accept attention, he would receive a surfeit of it, upon his personal merits alone. Though for that matter, I consider his military fame a very personal merit."

"You advocate his cause warmly. But who is he? For to tell me he is a military hero is to tell me next to nothing."

"He is Colonel Eastworth!" replied Erminie, with a little natural feeling of triumph.

"Colonel Eastworth!" exclaimed Miss Conyers, with all the surprise, and all the awakened interest, that Erminie could have desired.

"Yes! Now what do you think of the aristocrat, Britomarte?" inquired Erminie, with a little pardonable exultation in her manner.

Miss Conyers hesitated a moment, and then, with a slow smile, replied:

"My bonny love, I think that the learned pig, in becoming a world's wonder, remained—a pig."

"What do you mean by that, dear Britomarte?"

"I mean that your hero, in becoming a celebrity, continues to be—a man. And as such I rate him."

"And be-rate him, of course. Oh! Britomarte, Britomarte, you are incorrigible!"

"I am clear-sighted and consistent. But tell me, Erminie, how it happened that a quiet clergyman's like your father's should have become so very intimate with a lion and servant like Colonel Eastworth?"

"Oh, in this way. Years ago, my father was Colonel Eastworth's German master. Subsequently, Colonel Eastworth and my brother made the tour of Europe together. Lastly, after years of separation—they chanced to be fellow travellers, when on their return from the Continent, and their old intimacy was renewed. So that, in consenting to come down here with my father and brother, he stipulated that he should come incognito, in order to have a quiet time, without—"

"Blinding us with his glory?" laughingly interjected Britomarte.

"Having a ridiculous fuss made over him," said Erminie, finishing her sentence.

"But what induced him to honour our humble establishment with his illustrious presence at all?" inquired Miss Conyers, a little ironically.

"To please my father and brother, who were very desirous of having his company."

"And even then he only condescends to amuse himself among the simple beauties of a school-ball—under an alias! Is that quite worthy of an illustrious hero and an accomplished gentleman?" inquired Britomarte.

"Oh, but, dearest, he does not come so; he comes, indeed, *incognito*, but not under an alias. At his request we call him Mr. Loring, which is his middle name, and the only one to which he had any right until, by the death of his maternal grandfather—old Anthony Eastworth—he inherited the great Eastworth estate on condition of taking the name. His full name is Alfred Loring Eastworth."

"Well, darling; hero, scholar, and 'Eastworth,' as he is, is not of sufficient importance to keep us awake any longer. Let us go to sleep," said Miss Conyers. "And, love, I have only a few more words to say, and they are these—That this illustrious hero and all-accomplished scholar will soon relieve us of the glory of his presence. Men of his caste are fond of passing away an idle hour by flattering a school beauty, and when they have excited her interest and admiration, they go away and forget her. So I would have you be cautious how you permit this man to cultivate your acquaintance. And now good night."

"Good night, dear Britomarte. Oh, cold, cruel, caustic lessons, how I hate to learn them!" thought Erminie, as she resigned herself—not to sleep, but to dream over all the good and great qualities which certainly recommended the acquaintance of an evening to her particular esteem.

Ah! to all these girls, so different in temperament, character, and principles, so strongly attached to each other, the great drama of life was opening.

Britomarte, the man-hater, was summoning to her aid all the resources of her powerful intellect and energetic will to withstand the advance of an honest natural, disinterested love that was approaching her, full of blessings.

Erminie was cherishing an incipient interest in an object as far above her and as unattainable as the most distant fixed star, and whose preference might be supposed to bring her nothing but bane.

And how slept the other two young denizens of the dormitory?

They were not either of them of the character or temperament to come to grief. Yet they too were at cross-purposes.

Elfrida Fielding in her dreams danced over again the quadrilles she had "performed" with the tall and fair-haired betrothed of Alberta Goldsborough.

And the heiress, instead of thinking of her cousin Albert, the husband chosen for her by her parents, thought of the elegant, dark-eyed Adonis, Vittorio Corsoni, and thought what a pity it was that he should be only a professor of languages.

(To be continued.)

DR. SJOGREEN, a Swedish naturalist, states that the particles of pure iron found in the Swedish lakes result from the deoxidizing action of certain insects. Their larvae absorb oxygen from the oxide of iron, and form a cocoon of pure metal.

MEDICAL men, acting upon the advice of Chief-Justice Cockburn—that most practical and intelligent of men—are strongly advocating the disuse of technical words and phrases; and the movement has already progressed so far that all the "first-classes" London physicians are writing their prescriptions in English instead of dog-Latin—or rather say cur-Latin—which is used by the little nobodies who are ever foremost in supporting abuses and resisting all reforms.

DEATH OF A WATERLOO VETERAN.—Captain Crawford, of Warkworth, formerly of the 2nd Dragoons, or Royal Scotch Greys, expired at Liverpool lately. This gallant officer was one of the best cavalry soldiers in the British Army, and had seen, when he retired in 1859, fifty years' service in the above famous regiment, having girded himself with the soldier's harness when but a stripling. He was nominated Adjutant at Waterloo, and delighted to tell of the dashing style in which Hamilton had led the Greys into action in the celebrated charge that helped to turn the tide of battle on the memorable 18th of June. One of the most graceful compliments ever accorded to an officer was paid to Capt. Crawford by his old regiment when last quartered in Edinburgh. The whole of the Greys marched into George Square, opposite the house in which the gallant captain was a guest, and saluted him with due military honour.

THE TORPEDO.—One of these fish has been exhibited at Budleigh Salterton, on the south coast of Devon, which had been caught in a Brixham trawl. The lad who showed it called it an "electrified ray;" and said the fisherman who caught it, though he only touched it with one finger, received a severe shock, "his arm was left quivering for ten minutes." When it had been exterminated, it weighed about 25lb. Its colour was black and shining above (its skin like shagreen) and white below; tail large and flapping; spinal column heavy, seemingly with a great plexus of nerves attached to it; fins chiefly on the margin of its cylindrical outline.

LIZZIE LINCOLN.

CHAPTER I.

THEY were twin sisters, and so alike in form and feature that at a first glance you could not tell them apart; but you had only to watch them for five minutes to be quite sure that Lizzie was Lizzie and nobody else but her own sweet self, and that Priscilla was Priscilla—for in mind, in heart, in expression, they were as different as sunshine and moonlight, or a statue and a painting, and with the same sort of difference too: both beautiful—but the one cold, calm, pale, and still—the other glowing with life, full of spirit, genius, and sensibility. Priscilla stately, formal, reserved, and apathetic—Lizzie wild, loving, trustful, playful, and frank; and as soon as you detected this difference in their natures, you would begin also to perceive that in person, too, they differed slightly. Lizzie had a fuller, richer lip, a deeper, darker eye, a cheek more warmly tinged, and ever changing with her changing mood, a lighter and more yielding form, a step of more aerial grace, and a sunnier smile, a sweeter voice, a softer, yet merrier laugh; even her hair had an expression about it that did not belong to Priscilla's; both were deep brown in hue, but Lizzie's had a natural wave that caught the light and changed with it to gold.

Everybody loved Lizzie and petted her; that is, everybody whose love was worth having.

She was welcome and refreshing to their hearts as a sunbeam or a flower, or a singing-bird, or a balmy breeze, or a shower at noon in midsummer, and Lizzie loved her friends warmly and faithfully, without stopping to ask herself why.

She did not blind herself to their faults, but she loved them, faults and all. She was a rare sweet child; yet, still a child at heart, though fifteen summers had somewhat subdued and softened her too impetuous temperament.

They lived with their mother—a widow of moderate means—in a picturesque village of England, and at the time my story commences were in hourly expectation of a visit from an uncle, by the father's side, supposed to be rich, and known to be cross, gouty, and disagreeable.

"Elizabeth," said Mrs. Lincoln, seating herself at a window to watch for his arrival, "I must once more enjoin upon you that policy, as well as duty, requires us to humour your uncle in every whim to agree with him in all things."

"But, mother!" said Lizzie, with a pleading look, "I never can act from policy, and as to pretending to agree with him when I don't, that would be an absolute impossibility to me."

"I do not choose to argue the matter, Miss. Remember that I insist upon obedience. I only wish you were as precise in other matters as you are in your absurd notions of right and wrong. You, my dear Priscilla, will, I am sure, obey me without a question."

"Certainly, mamma!" replied the demure young lady, in a placid voice.

The tears sprang to Lizzie's lovely eyes; but she smiled them away, and going to the piano-forte, began to play and sing in her soft, soothing voice, her mother's favourite song:

"Though storms may gather o'er us,
The sun will smile again;
Though dark the way before us,
We're led by love's true chain.
"Though sadly leaves the bosom,
Joy always follows care;
There's many a summer blossom
In winter's tangled hair."

Two young and distinguished-looking men, passing at the time, involuntarily glanced in through the open window, and as Lizzie raised her head at the rustling of the vine leaves, which they brushed in going by, she encountered from a pair of dark grey eyes a momentary glance of earnest admiration, which she never afterward forgot.

For almost the first time in her life, Lizzie Lincoln fell into a deep reverie; but it was soon broken by the arrival of a carriage, from which alighted a bundle of shawls, flannel, ugliness, gout and grumbling,

which was introduced by Mrs. Lincoln to her daughters as their invalid uncle.

Lizzie before he entered had silently placed the easiest chair, with a stool before it, in the pleasantest corner of the room; but she allowed her mother and sister to assist him into it without offering her aid. "My dear sir," said Mrs. Lincoln, "you are looking ten years younger than when I last saw you, and so like my poor, dead husband!"—her husband, by the way, had been considered a remarkably handsome man. "Doesn't he, Priscilla? Doesn't he, Lizzie?"

"Very much," said Priscilla.

And nothing said Lizzie, but walked quietly out of the room.

"That is a singular young person—that daughter of yours, ma'am," grumbled the old gentleman; "don't think she takes much pains to please her rich uncle."

"Oh! my dear sir, you must forgive her; she is timid to a fault. Is she not, Priscilla?"

"Yes, mamma," said echo.

And where did Lizzie go? My youthful readers, if you have not kind and warm hearts like hers, you will never guess; but I dare say you have, and that you would have done the same thing.

She went straight to the spare chamber appropriated to her uncle, to see that everything was arranged for his comfort, then into the garden, whence she brought fresh flowers to adorn the room, then to her own little chamber, from which she took a Bible to lay on the table by his bed, and then into the kitchen to oversee the preparations for his supper.

Meanwhile, the two young men pursued their walk and their conversation.

"Yes, my dear Howard," said he who had attracted Lizzie's notice, "I tell you the simple truth; I am weary of my rank, my wealth, and the insufferable attentions which they bring upon me from ambitious daughters and manoeuvring mammas. How delicious it would be to settle quietly down in this charming village with such a wife as that bright, beautiful, artless-looking girl whom we saw just now through the window! But I fear I shall never marry, for I shall always be haunted by the idea that my wealth is the object of attraction. Unless—Howard! I have it! Glorious!" and with his fine, manly face kindling and glowing with enthusiasm, the young earl passed on in earnest conversation with his friend.

Perhaps he will re-appear ere the close of the story; but in the meantime we must introduce our readers to a new character and a new schoolmaster.

CHAPTER II.

AT twenty-two years of age Charles Welford came to the village of S—, poor and unknown, but his mild dignity of manner, his prepossessing appearance, his youthful and handsome countenance gained him a host of friends, and the small number of pupils to which he had limited himself was soon made up. Mrs. Lincoln sent Lizzie and Priscilla to be perfected in French and Italian—and the former made wonderfully rapid progress—if not in the languages, at least in the affections of her teacher.

"Miss Lincoln," the master would say, endeavouring, but in vain, to look stern, "I shall be obliged to detain you after school hours if you persist in talking and laughing;" and Lizzie would blush and maintain a demure composure for the next three minutes and a half—then he would hear the little gipsy buzzing away again, for the least sound of her sweet voice always attracted his notice, and calling her to him with a grave face, but inward delight, he would point silently to a little chair at his side.

Poor Lizzie, half pouting, half pleased, "with a smile on her lip and a tear in her eye," would quietly obey. I rather think Lizzie liked the punishment upon the whole, for his dark eyes had talked to her soul a language more pleasant than French or Italian; and after looking earnestly up to them for a moment to discover if he were really offended—re-assured by the glance of affectionate interest which he returned to her inquiring gaze, she would study for hours by his side, happy and tranquil, and silent as a dove in its woodland nest.

Now and then, when she had been more than usually wild and uncontrollable, Mr. Welford would feel it his duty to detain her after the other pupils had left, in order to give her a serious lecture upon the lightness of her conduct; but the serious lecture generally ended in a long ramble through the woods after flowers, to assist their botanical studies.

And during these rambles they would confide to each other's sympathizing hearts their memories, their hopes, their tastes and preferences. Lizzie with all the simple, trustful tenderness of a child, and Charles with the frankness natural to a spirit still fresh, pure and untrammelled.

"Do you know, Mr. Welford," said Lizzie, one day, "I would give a great deal that my uncle was poor!"

"Poor! Lizzie—what a strange wish! Why?"

"Oh, because—he is so ill, and cross and unhappy that I pity him from my heart, and I would be so very, very kind to him if he were not rich; but as it is, mother makes me treat him coldly."

"How? I do not understand you, I thought she was all attention to him, and wished you to be so too."

"Yes! that is the very reason I can't be. She keeps telling me he will leave us all his money if we indulge his whims and agree with him in his queer opinions; and so I make it a rule to be indifferent to him, except in his absence, and then I do all I can for his comfort—but that is not much. I should so like to soothe his pain by reading to him, or singing, or caressing him. I am afraid he won't live long, and he seems to suffer a great deal at times. Oh! don't you wish he were poor?"

Lizzie was right.

Ill in mind and body, the unhappy old man was daily wasting away.

Of all his relations, of all the world, Lizzie Lincoln was the only one he loved; and she alone of all apparently neglected him.

Yes! in spite of her neglect, he loved her.

He struggled against the preference, but in vain; he could not help it—she was so frank, so sweet, so frolicsome, and above all, so like his favourite brother.

Importuned, beset, followed, fawned upon for his wealth alone, he had become disgusted with life, and his naturally kind heart embittered by suspicion.

"Mrs. Lincoln, don't you prefer cold muffins to hot ones?" asked the uncle at breakfast one day, with a look of dogged determination that rather mystified his auditors.

Mrs. Lincoln changed an involuntary wry face into an acquiescent one—"If there was anything she preferred hot rather than cold it was a muffin—and replied:

"Oh, decidedly, my dear sir! They are infinitely more palatable cold. I only ordered hot ones to please you. We will have some cold ones immediately. John, bring some cold muffins."

A sardonic smile flickered on the old gentleman's furrowed face as he turned to Priscilla:

"And which do you prefer?"

Priscilla, as usual, glanced at her mother, and then replied:

"Cold ones, sir, of course."

"Of course," he repeated, sarcastically. "And you, Miss Lizzie?"

Lizzie looked up frankly in his face.

"Uncle, you know I like hot ones best, and I think your taste a very singular one if you prefer them cold."

"Who said I preferred them cold? Not I. Come, Lizzie, we will share this nice one together, and here comes John with the cold for your mother and Priscilla. Hand them to your mistress, John. I am sorry, ladies, you have been eating hot muffins merely on my account."

And he glanced at Lizzie so comically, while her mother reluctantly helped herself to the unpalatable muffin, that she could scarcely restrain a smile.

CHAPTER III.

A FEW weeks after the conversation alluded to in the last chapter, the old man sent for the family to his bedside, which he had not left for several days, and with a half-repressed chuckle of satisfaction, informed them that he had an important secret to reveal.

Mrs. Lincoln beat eagerly over him, Priscilla seated herself with her usual quiet composure, and Lizzie half drew back.

"You have repeatedly told me, madam, that it was for my own sake you valued me so highly—for my own superior qualities of mind and heart, for my striking resemblance to your deceased husband; not for my wealth—that wealth was nothing in the eyes of affection, etc. I thank you as you deserve for this assurance. I will not insult you by a moment's doubt of its sincerity." Mrs. Lincoln smiled benignly, and Lizzie turned impatiently to the window. "I have taken you at your word, and fully trusting to its truth, have made my will accordingly. It is in the hands of my solicitor. I have left the whole of my vast property, in specie and landed estate—with the exception of a trifling gift—to one who has never troubled me with his company, his attentions or his flattery, a poor apprentice.

Unable to conceal her disappointment and vexation, Mrs. Lincoln hurried from the room.

Priscilla followed with a still statelier step than usual, and Lizzie, springing from the window, clasped her uncle's hand, exclaiming:

"I am so glad! I am so glad! Now I can nurse you with pleasure, and love you as much as I choose!"

The old man was speechless at first with surprise and joy, then at length he exclaimed:

"Is it possible you really care for me?"

"Dear, dear uncle, were you not kind to my poor father in trouble? Did you not assist him with your purse and your influence? and do you think I can ever forget it?"

The invalid sunk back on his pillow with closed eyes, through which tears, the first he had shed for long years, stole over his withered cheeks, and murmuring "Thank God!" fell into a tranquil sleep, still holding Lizzie's hand fast locked in his.

From that time until his death, which happened in a few days, she nursed him with the tenderness and attention of an affectionate daughter.

Mrs. Lincoln was agreeably surprised to find, on the opening of the will, that the "trifling gift to one very dear to him," was no less than a sum of £2,000, bequeathed to her daughter Elizabeth.

The latter generously, or, as she said, justly, shared this sum with her mother and sister, and affairs went on as before, excepting that somehow the rambles after flowers in the woods grew longer and more frequent.

"We are trying to find the little blue 'forget-me-not,' which Mr. Welford is sure grows in these woods somewhere," said poor Lizzie, blushing and smiling, when one day a friend questioned her rather too closely upon the subject.

Autumn had come, with its cheerful fires, its picnic fêtes and evening dances, and with it came to the village of S— a young and wealthy nobleman, who fell desperately in love with Lizzie at a party; and one afternoon when she came into her mother's little parlour, looking particularly bewitching in her simple straw bonnet and graceful mantilla, and found him there alone, he suddenly offered her his hand and heart.

But Lizzie laughed the matter off, by telling him that she could not possibly stop to accept it, as she was in a great hurry to go into the woods, in search of a certain little blue flower called the "forget-me-not."

Away she tripped, and when she returned, an hour after sunset, the youth had vanished, and the village "that had known him, knew him no more."

A flood of warm golden light from the setting sun poured in through a vista of the woods, and lighted up a picture well worthy of such an illumination.

A young and graceful girl was leaning against the trunk of a noble tree. Her straw bonnet lay on the mossy rock beside her.

Her soft curls fell showering round her face as she bent over a flower which she held in her hand. It was the little blue "forget-me-not" from whose mystic petals many a romantic village maid had learned her destiny.

Leaf after leaf the blushing girl pulled off, murmuring as she did so in a low and trembling tone, half sportive, half in earnest, "He loves me—he loves me not—he loves me—he loves me not;" only one leaf remained—"He loves—" the flower was gently withdrawn, and the hand that held it pressed passionately to the lips of a noble looking youth who had stolen unperceived around the tree.

"Let me speak for the last leaf, Lizzie," he whispered, "He loves thee more than life! Dear one, may he believe his love returned?"

Lizzie smiled through her tears—he drew her to his heart!

For a moment the lingering sunshine rested softly on the fair tableau, then passed and left it to the hoarser light of love.

"Have you found the blue 'forget-me-not' yet?" said the good old rector of S—, with a meaning smile, to a fair and white-robed maiden at his side, as they sat with others at the bridal feast about a year after the performance of the forest-tableau. Lizzie Welford looked up in her husband's eyes, which were bent fondly upon her, and smiled, but did not reply.

Pleasant and comfortable, but simply furnished, was the cottage in which the schoolmaster and his beautiful and happy wife passed the first few months of their marriage.

But Charles grew restless then, and he persuaded Lizzie—who never could resist his persuasions—to take a little journey with him.

In their own humble chaise they travelled through the delightful and richly cultivated country, and Lizzie was enchanted with almost all she saw. There was but one drawback on her happiness; and that had always been her chief trouble from childhood—her sympathies were too powerful to allow her to behold poverty or misery in any shape without a pang of pity and an ardent wish to relieve it; and this her humble means would not always allow her to do.

As she passed some beggars on the road, to whom she had thrown some silver, she turned to her husband with tears in her eyes, and said:

"Oh, Charles! I never care for wealth for my own sake, but would it not be divine happiness to possess the power of relieving others?"

Charles smiled—rather too gaily, she thought, but he pressed her hand so tenderly that she could not chide him.

At the close of the second day's journey, they came to a beautiful and extensive park, through the vistas of which they could catch now and then a glimpse of a magnificent mansion. Lizzie thought it must be a

Her eyes flashed with delight, and then filled with tears.

She was excited and nervous, she knew not why. She had read of such places, but she had never seen one, and she begged Charles to stop the chaise for a few moments, that she might gaze her

"We will drive through the park," said her husband. "I know the owner well."

She thought his voice trembled, and looking up in his face, she saw that it was lighted up with a glow of lofty exultation, which so well became his refined and aristocratic beauty that she involuntarily raised his hand to her lips and kissed it fondly, yet with a vague fear for which she could not account.

They drove through the park to the principal entrance of the house. As they approached, it was flung wide open; and from a train of liveried servants stepped forth an old man, who smiled an earnest welcome as he respectfully assisted Charles to alight.

Lizzie was dumb with wonder.

"Come!" said her husband, holding out his hand.

"Where are you taking me, Charles?"

"To my home, dear Lizzie," he exclaimed, pressing her fondly to his bosom, as he bore her half-fainting into the library, where a pleasant fire was kindled. "Welcome to my home—to the home of my fathers! my own, my precious wife!"

"And who then are you, my husband?" asked the bewildered and half-frightened Lizzie, sinking on a sofa by his side.

"My dear Howard," said he, laughing, to a young man who at that moment hastily entered the room, "before you welcome me, introduce me to my wife!"

"The Earl of E—, dear madam," said his friend, coming forward with a smile.

"The Earl of E—, sweet countess," echoed Charles. "Think you that dear forehead will ache beneath this toy?"

And taking from a casket a coronet of diamonds, he placed it on her head and kissed her tearful eyes.

And what did the youthful countess do?

Forgive her, Etiquette! Forgive her, Mr. Howard! She was weary—almost exhausted with excitement and fatigue—and closing her lashes, still wet with tears, upon her husband's shoulder, she murmured a blessing upon his name, and fell fast asleep, like a tired child as she was!

Courteous reader! if you have not already followed her example, you may do so now—for my story is ended.

F. S. G.

THE WHITE WIDOW.—The Strand Exchange, in the time of William and Mary, was the scene of the pretty story of the "White Widow." For several days a sombrestress appeared at one side of the stalls, clothed in white, and wearing a white mask. She excited great curiosity, and all the fashionable world thronged her stall. This mysterious milliner was at last discovered to be no less person than the Duchess of Tyrconnell, widow of Talbot, the dethroned Lord Deputy of Ireland under James II. Unable to obtain a secret access to her family, and almost starving, she had been compelled to turn shopwoman. Her relatives provided for her directly the story became known. The duchess was the Frances Jennings mentioned by Grammont, and sister to the Duchess of Marlborough.

THE BURYING BEETLES.—The Burying Beetles, sometimes called the "Sextons," exhibit a very interesting kind of instinct in providing for their larva. These *Necrophori*, as they are sometimes called, are some of them very handsome, being most frequently red or orange-coloured, and finely spotted or barred with black. Gleditsch, in his "Recreations of Natural History," published in 1765, has given a very interesting account of their habits. He tells us that if a dead reptile or piece of flesh be placed as a bait for them at the proper season, they appear in an incredibly short time, guided no doubt by an extremely keen sense of smell, which enables them to scent it from a considerable distance. When they arrive, they appear to survey the object with a certain kind of deliberation, as though taking the measure of its dimensions; after which they at once commence digging underneath, and sometimes bury it above a foot deep, the whole operation occupying but a few hours. When the work is complete, the female deposits her eggs upon

the object, and it is then covered up so as to leave but little trace of the performance. An instance is recorded of the singular manner in which their instinct enables them to overcome unexpected difficulties when they occur. A mole, as it is said, was suspended to the upper end of a stick fixed firmly in the ground, and the scent of the carcass soon attracted the "Sextons," who appeared at first much disconcerted by the situation of the coveted supply of provender for their future progeny. After a kind of consultation, however, which appears to have been very much to the point, they proceeded to undermine the stick, which, yielding to a few hours' unceasing labour, at last fell, and the prize was secured and duly interred after the usual fashion.—*The Butterfly Vivarium*, by Noel Humphreys.

There are at present 150 lifeboats on the coasts of the United Kingdom, belonging to the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, and 35 to local boards. The mortar and rocket apparatus stations now number 243, and are under the management of the coast-guard and the Board of Trade. During the year 1864 and the first eight months of 1865, 627 lives (besides 28 vessels) were saved by the lifeboats of the National Institution alone, and 395 by shore boats and other means, for which it granted rewards. A sum of £2,297 was expended by the Institution in the same period in rewards; and £34,128 on its various establishments round the coasts of the British Isles. In the presence of facts like these, the Lifeboat Institution need have no misgiving in respect to pecuniary support, whilst it pursues vigorously and successfully the great and national objects for the promotion of which it was established more than forty years ago.

EVA ASHLEY.

CHAPTER XXV.

AN ESCAPE.

MRS. ASHLEY'S excitement alarmed her husband, and he tenderly said:

"No, my darling; if all the world accused you, and you declared yourself innocent, I would take your word, even if circumstantial evidence condemned you. But you are ill, Daisy; you must be delirious to talk in such a strain as this."

A strange laugh came from her lips, and she said: "I believe I am distraught. I feel fever rising in my veins; but I must get home before I can afford to be ill. Yes—Yes—I will get home and stay there. Don't ask me to come away from it again—pray don't. I am happy there, and safe—safe! Oh, I wish I had never come here—never heard—Oh, heaven, am I losing all power to restrain my tongue?"

She looked so wild and feverish, that the squire was thoroughly alarmed, and he insisted that she should retire to bed at once, and endeavour to compose herself to sleep.

It was easy enough to obey the first, but the last seemed impossible of attainment.

Mrs. Ashley felt as if she should never again be able to compose the tumult of contending emotions that raged in her heart; but she laid her head upon its uneasy pillow, closed her aching eyes, and made the doting old man believe that she at length slept, in the hope that he would seek the repose she knew so greatly needed.

He refused to leave his idol, and ordered a couch to be placed near the bed on which she lay, that he might watch over her through the night.

It was a weary, weary vigil to his poor crushed Daisy, who could not utter in his presence the moans of anguish that arose to her lips, to be forced back again upon her aching heart.

She believed the wrong she had committed was almost atoned for during those hours of suffering, and laid the flatteringunction to her soul that since the dead was irrevocable, she might yet find pardon for sin.

On the following morning she was too ill to rise till late in the day, and she did not leave her room till the carriage which was to take them to the station was at the door.

Then heavily veiled, almost sustained by the supporting arm of the squire, she descended the stairs and stepped into the vehicle.

She wondered if Martin was actually gone, or if he was in the crowd watching to discover some further proof of the fatal identity he suspected, and she trembled and grew cold at the thought.

Mrs. Ashley dared not look around to see if a once familiar face was among the group near the door, and she cowered down upon her seat, and drew her shrouding veil more closely around her.

She drew a deep breath as the carriage rolled away from the hotel without the detection she so deeply dreaded, and her usual presence of mind returned as the distance from the scene of danger increased.

The station was gained without any accident, and

the party took their places. The bell was ringing, and Mrs. Ashley wished they would start without a moment of further delay, for every instant, she believed, was fraught with danger to herself.

At length the train was put in motion, but so slowly that she could see what was going on without. A cab came rapidly towards the station, driven by a young man in a naval uniform.

Mrs. Ashley trembled, and sunk suddenly back upon her seat, for the occupant of the cab drew up beside the platform, and eagerly scanned every window as the long train slowly moved out of the station.

With an air of extreme disappointment, he muttered:

"Baffled at last! After all my trouble in getting leave to come ashore for the few last hours, the bird has flown, and I have not found out if it was Margaret Brandon. But I am a fool to think that she could ever become the wife of that old millionaire, even if she dared do such a thing."

The train vanished, and whipping up his horse, Martin returned baffled, he confessed, for that time, but resolute to follow up the clue accidentally gained, whenever time and opportunity allowed him to do so.

The heavy pulsations of Mrs. Ashley's heart did not cease till they were whirling along at a rate that defied pursuit, and she then became faint at the thought of the danger she had so narrowly escaped. She mentally murmured:

"Three years—three years of safety—for he said he would be away that long. In that time I can take such measures to evade him as must prove successful. Yes, yes, I must—I must, for everything is now at stake for me."

The squire watched over her with extreme solicitude, for he saw that something had given a shock to her which threatened to produce serious consequences.

Aware of his uneasiness concerning herself, Mrs. Ashley summoned all her energies to her assistance, to enable her to sit up till she was again safe at Ashurst.

Then, the long tension ended, there was no longer a necessity for self-control, and the sufferer succumbed beneath the mysterious weight that was pressing her to the dust.

She was too ill to attend the quiet funeral of Mrs. Wentworth, and Dr. Manton was immediately summoned to her side.

He pronounced her nervous system deranged by some recent shock, and ordered sedatives. The invalid listened to him vaguely, and slyly threw away his medicines in place of taking them.

She felt convinced that they could do her no good; the death-struggle between the last remains of principle and the voice of self-interest was wearing her to the grave; but she persuaded herself that she had now no other path open to her than the one which led to guilt and degradation.

The first crime against a helpless infant had plunged her into a sea of wrong, from which there was no escape for her without utter and irretrievable ruin to herself and the child for whom she had risked so much; and slowly and gradually she reconciled herself to the position she felt in a manner forced to occupy.

For herself there was nothing now left but to cling to the worldly prosperity she had purchased at the sacrifice of everything she had once valued, and her final resolution was to retain it at all hazards.

Mrs. Ashley felt that she was a worse woman for every struggle in which she conquered, for she was rebelling against her best instincts, and clutching to her heart the price which had been paid for the soul which was once pure and noble, though it had fallen before poverty and temptation.

During this season of suffering, her conduct toward the squire was even more capricious than it had been before their union.

At times she would scarcely permit him to approach her; but seeing how unhappy that rendered him, she would repent of her coldness, and herself lavish caresses upon him, and entreat him to pardon her waywardness.

This he readily did, for he still adored her through every phase of her capricious and inscrutable character.

Many months of perfect calm at length in a measure restored her tranquillity; her mind, long vibrating between right and expediency, finally settled on the last, and the long struggle ended.

Mrs. Ashley seemed to regain her old elasticity of temperament and gaiety of heart, but a harder expression than was natural to her charming features settled upon them, and it was evident that a change had passed over her which was not for the better.

Frank Wentworth fell naturally into his place in the family, and he soon fondly attached himself to his adopted mother, who, even in her moments of greatest irritability, never failed to speak kindly and gently to the orphan boy.

He bore no resemblance to his mother's family, which was a source of regret to his grandfather; it was long before Squire Ashley could overcome his repugnance to the memory of his father sufficiently to caress his son; but gradually the fearless and clever lad made his way to the heart which had so long closed itself against him, and Frank took the place in his grandfather's affections and home to which he was justly entitled.

The fondness of the lad for Bessie was the first thing that touched the old man; she now began to toddle about and speak in the first imperfect accents of babyhood.

Squire Ashley watched the children with extreme interest from day to day as they played together, and it interested him to see with what care Frank would shield the younger one from every danger, and his tact and tenderness, he thought, gave a clue to the character of the future man.

CHAPTER XXVI.

HUNTED DOWN.

AFTER the clouded days which followed the visit to London, a long period of sunshine rested on Ashurst, and Squire Ashley seemed to grow younger in the genial atmosphere of peace and affection which surrounded him.

Mrs. Ashley was certainly a model wife and mother, for she neglected no duty that devolved upon her, she made her husband happy, was adored by the children, and respected by the servants.

Nearly three years lapsed away in this Eden-like calm, when the mistress of the house was again attacked with the nervous restlessness which had so nearly proved fatal to her once before.

She secluded herself as much as possible in her chamber, and even there she would start and change colour at the approach of a strange step, or a sudden knock upon the door.

Again the family physician was baffled, and she locked deep in her own heart the cause of her illness. Again that bitter struggle between principle and interest convulsed both heart and brain; but, as before, the latter conquered, though the bitter anguish with which she often muttered, "Too late—too late!" was pitiable.

If she had sinned, she suffered, for by yielding to temptation she had entangled herself in a net from which there was no escape, yet which she feared was gradually narrowing around her with every passing hour.

If detection fell upon her now, she was ruined, destroyed—nothing would be left to her but to hide her head in shame and die.

During this season of suffering Mrs. Ashley would scarcely permit her child to be absent from her a moment. The very danger that menaced them both seemed to strengthen the fond maternal love she had always felt for her daughter.

She would sit for hours with the little girl clasped in her arms, using every art to amuse and detain her; and this was easily accomplished, as Bessie's playmate now went regularly to a school in the neighbourhood; and in Frank's absence the child was glad to have her Minny, as she called Mrs. Ashley, to play with and amuse her.

Her passionate affection for the little girl was manifested on by every one that saw them together; but with ready tact, Mrs. Ashley managed to avert suspicion by caressing Frank with nearly as great a show of affection when he was near her.

She was really very fond of the bright and promising lad, but the only creature that entered into her heart of hearts was her own darling, who seemed all the nearer to her because others were ignorant of the tie that bound them together.

One afternoon the squire came into her room and found Bessie, with her little, dimpled hands clasped in those of her mother, on whose lap she was kneeling. She stretched out her fat arms to their utmost extent, and pressed her rosy lips to those of Mrs. Ashley, ending each performance with a burst of ringing laughter.

He half-envied the perfect good understanding that seemed to exist between them, and the child turned her charming face towards him and replied:

"Dan'pa, we're mewrin love-ribbin; ain't it nice?"

"It seems to be, from the way you and Minny appear to enjoy it. I do believe, Daisy, that if this little creature were your own child, you could not love her more dearly than you do."

Mrs. Ashley flushed and grew pale, as she replied:

"Was she not my nurse child? Why, then, shall I not love her; especially as she took the place of one that was removed from me?"

"True, my love; Bessie was sent as a consolation, and your tender heart accepted her as such. I understand the feelings you cherish for my pretty pet. It

is strange, but neither of my grandchildren bear the slightest resemblance to my family. If it were not for the mark on Bessie's arm, I should be almost tempted to believe that she is not of my blood; and Frank is the living image of his father."

For an instant the heart of the listener stood still, but she rallied her courage sufficiently to say:

"Bessie may grow like your family as she advances toward womanhood. She is such a baby yet that you cannot tell what she will be in the future."

The squire lifted a ring of soft hair from the brow of the child, and said:

"I can easily tell that this golden-brown aurore that crowns her like a halo will never darken to the tint which characterizes my family; nor those limp greyish-blue eyes ever assume the flashing blackness of those of my race. No—the child is a blonde. I suppose she is like her mother, and I am quite satisfied that it should be so, for her father was anything but a pride and a comfort to me."

He sighed heavily as he finished speaking; and anxious to turn the conversation from the dangerous topic of the little girl's appearance, Mrs. Ashley said:

"You have never yet confided to me the mystery concerning your son, which you have more than once hinted at. As Bessie's father, I naturally feel a deep interest in learning what caused his early death. Will you tell me now? I am just in the mood to hear it, for I need something to arouse and excite me."

"I have often wished to tell you this sad story, Daisy; but its very memory is so terrible to me that I always have shrunk from it. Since it is your wish to know what has been too long concealed from you, I will reveal the secret now."

Mrs. Ashley trembled in spite of herself, for there was something ominous in the voice and manner of the squire, and she wondered why she should be moved at the prospect of hearing a revelation she had long desired; one which she had no idea could possess any peculiar interest for herself.

She faintly said:

"If it will not distress you too much, I shall be glad to hear the story now."

He sat down beside her, kissed Bessie, and placing her on the floor, bade her run out on the lawn and play with Winny till her Minny called her again.

Glad to escape into the sunshine, the child shook her radiant curls and rushed out, calling loudly on the name of her nurse.

Mrs. Ashley arose and ran her slender fingers through the whitened locks of her husband, as she caressedingly said:

"Something has troubled you to-day, love. Shall I not share your burdens as well as your joys? Tell me what has moved you, that I may endeavour to console you."

Squire Ashley drew her down beside him, and after a pause, said:

"I have been thinking of that sad, sad time, my love, before you came hither to become the light and life of my desolate existence. Through all these happy years, Margaret, I have had one concealment from you which has now become a burden. My pride has hitherto withheld me from speaking of it, even to you, but to-day letters have come to me of so unexpected a nature that I must speak of this new trouble to some one in whose sympathy and discretion I have perfect reliance."

"You may trust me as your second self!" was the reply.

And with a glance of fond confidence, the squire replied:

"I know it, my good Daisy, and I have come to you for consolation and advice."

He paused, and she waited in a state of nervous impatience for him to explain himself. He vaguely went on:

"We were speaking of Leon. Have you seen the gravestone in the burying-ground which bears his name? But why should I ask such a question? Of course you have seen it."

"Yes, I have seen it, many times!"

Squire Ashley regarded her steadily as he asked:

"What would you say to me if I should tell you that the marble lies—that no son of mine lies below it?"

Mrs. Ashley shrank from the searching glance he fixed upon her. She felt herself growing pale, and a death-chill seemed to strike to her very soul. She faintly gasped:

"Where then is he? What have you done with him during all these years?"

He drew a long breath, and said:

"Let me tell you the story from the beginning, Margaret, and then you will be able to find some excuse for the deception I was compelled to practise. In those days I was hard—hard as the nether mill-stone, and pride was the strongest feeling of my nature. It led me to cast off my daughter when she

made a poor marriage, and refuse all her prayers for forgiveness. It led me to pronounce upon my unhappy son the sentence of legal death, expatriation from his native land, and the renunciation of the name I no longer considered him worthy to bear. Margaret, you came to me as the spirit of mercy and love, you have changed my nature, and it is due to you to confide entirely in you."

Mrs. Ashley listened in painful bewilderment. Was she to understand that the supposed father of the heiress yet lived, that he might yet not only snatch from her daughter the inheritance she had sacrificed so much to secure for her, but he might use his parental authority to take from her protection the child he believed to be his own?

The last thought almost deprived her of breath, and with difficulty she said:

"Leon Ashley still lives. It was unkind to conceal this from me so long! Pray let me hear the story you preferred to tell me, that I may understand the necessity for banishing him from his home and country?"

"You shall hear it, Margaret, and judge between him and me."

As candidly as possible, Squire Ashley went over the story of that fatal bridal night; he concealed from her the forcible entry of his son into his library, but clearly gave his other reasons for dooming him to exile and supposed death.

Mrs. Ashley listened like one in a dream, and then asked:

"How has this secret been so well kept? I have been under this roof more than four years, and this is the first intimation I have had of the criminal course of your son?"

With some of his old sternness the squire replied:

"My servants, when you first came, knew better than to gossip to a stranger about the disgraceful conduct of Leon. Besides, they felt it almost as a personal stigma on themselves. After you became my wife, of course their lips were sealed on such a subject. Old Jupiter is the only one who is aware that my reckless son yet lives, and he would be torn by wild horses sooner than betray it, unless I commanded him to speak."

"Where is Mr. Ashley now, and what is his history since he left his native land?" she forced herself to ask.

"He has travelled much, but at this time he is in Italy, and he has written to make the strangest confession to me. In spite of all my efforts to induce Grace Arden not to trust him with her life and fortune, she insisted that as their marriage was legal, she was bound to follow him into exile, since it was his wish that she should do so. She eloped with him under his assumed name, and was again married to him. She went with him, and at her request I acted as agent for her, receiving her income, and transmitting it to her in Paris.

"Until to-day I believed that Grace was contented with the lot she had chosen, and happy in the child she bore in the first year of her marriage; but I have the sorrow of now knowing that Leon has systematically deceived me for the last three years, and the woman he now claims as his wife has assisted him to do so."

"What woman? and what has become of Grace?" asked the deeply interested listener.

Since Leon Ashley had another child who was the heiress to her mother's fortune, he would be likely to leave the abandoned one to those who had so long cared for her.

The squire sadly went on:

"My son's last wife has recently become the mother of a son, and he has written to me to confess what has been so long concealed. It seems that at the birth of her daughter, Grace Arden lost her reason, and she has been in a mad-house from that time till her death, which took place about two months ago.

"When assured by her physicians that Grace would never recover her reason, Leon obtained a divorce and married an English lady, who, he assures me, has made him a most excellent and affectionate wife."

"And what is Mr. Ashley's object in writing this statement to you now?" she steadily asked.

"Leon knows that I am an old man, and he fears that I will make a will in accordance with a promise made to him on that sad night, to bequeath the whole of my estate to the daughter of his first wife. He states that shortly before Grace lost her mind, she gave him a deed which entitles him to the income arising from her property during the minority of her child. Leon goes on to say that his habits are such that he can save nothing from the large sum annually transmitted to him; and as the fortune of his last wife is trifling, the son just born to him will be destitute unless I make some alteration in my testamentary provisions and divide the estate equally between the two children. As he relinquished his own claim on me in favour of his daughter, he demands that I shall make this change in my will."

"It is a strange and exciting story; but what do you intend to do?"

"I will do what I think just. I have made Leon a liberal allowance, in addition to the large sum he annually draws from the Arden estates; and if he does not choose to curtail his own extravagance for the sake of providing for his son, the child must do without fortune. The son of so deceitful and unprincipled a woman as this Augusta must be, shall never cut Frank out of his share of my estate by being permitted to come in as co-heir with Bessie."

A bright flush of triumph came from the eyes of Mrs. Ashley, and she lifted his hand to her lips, and said:

"I felt sure that I could trust to your sense of justice to do what was right by little Frank. He is a noble boy, and he will be worthy to represent your family in the time to come."

"I hope so—I believe so—for he is a lad of promise. The present Mrs. Leon Ashley has assisted her husband to carry out his deception by writing to me in the character of Grace, and I think she and her husband are suited to mate together. Their son is likely to prove no credit to his blood, and I shall do nothing for him beyond leaving a few hundred pounds to educate him. The bulk of my property I shall bequeath to the two children who brighten our daily life, and give us something to look forward to in the future."

"You love them both tenderly—I can see that every day—and I think you are right to place Frank on a footing with Bessie. I have long wished to make a suggestion to you, and if you will listen to it I think you will do better for them than they will be likely to do for themselves."

"What do you mean, Daisy? You know that you have only to speak to be listened to, with respect at least."

After an agitated pause, Mrs. Ashley said:

"Frank is a fine child, and I feel assured that he will mature into a good and true man. I confess to you that I dread the thought of our pretty Bessie hereafter becoming the victim of a mere fortune-hunter, as so many girls possessing property do. Marriage is a lottery at the best, in which more often than prizes are won; and if I had children of my own I would endeavour to fix their matrimonial fate as far as it lay in my power to do so. Place the future of those children beyond doubt, by making it necessary to wed each other, if they would enjoy your estate after you are gone. They love each other now—they must be happy together."

Squire Ashley listened to her with some surprise; he thoughtfully said:

"This is not the first time you have thought of this, Daisy, but it seems unfair to elog the inheritance of these little ones with a condition from which one, or both, may hereafter recoil."

"Not unfair, if by that means you secure a noble husband for your heiress—a lovely wife for your heir!" she eagerly replied. "Besides, in that case the estate will remain intact. Frank can assume your name, and sustain the ancient prestige of his family."

Mrs. Ashley knew that in this she was touching the squire in his most vulnerable point, for he had long resisted the entreaties of his wife that Frank should share the estate with Bessie because he wished it to remain undivided. Confident of her power to induce him eventually to yield on both points, Mrs. Ashley had persevered until the first one was gained; and she now saw with alarm that, unless her plans were speedily carried into effect, a counter influence might frustrate them, and leave the two young creatures, whose future she so earnestly desired to rest in her hands, free to choose or reject each other as their inclination prompted.

She must give her daughter a legal claim on the Ashley estate, and only by binding her irrevocably to Frank could this be done. The want of fortune, Mrs. Ashley believed to be the greatest of evils, and she had made up her mind that if either of these children ventured to oppose her will in the time to come, the one that thwarted her should bear the stings of as grinding poverty as she herself had once known.

But she comforted herself with the belief that her child would not be the one to suffer thus. Her training—her influence over Bessie—must prevent that; and to bend Frank to her will she had the dying wishes of his mother to influence him to the course she so ardently desired.

Mrs. Ashley would not see that any obstacle could hereafter intervene to prevent a union so desirable to herself, and she used all her power over her doting husband to bring him over to his own views.

Squire Ashley would not immediately give his consent to alter his will, but he left the question open to future discussion; and assured in her own mind of ultimate success, Mrs. Ashley went out to join her daughter on the lawn, while the squire retired to the library to reply to the letter of his son.

It was a soft bright October day; the early frost had thrown their gorgeous livery over the forest, and the trees blazed in garments of crimson and gold; the atmosphere was filled with the dreamy haziness of summer, and Mrs. Ashley sat down on a rustic seat to reflect on what had recently passed between herself and her husband.

The prattle of Bessie broke in upon the thoughts that thronged upon her, and she commanded Winnie to take the child into the house. After a few moments she felt too restless to remain seated, and she arose and walked toward a grove of ash trees which lay beyond the boundary of the lawn.

Of late she very rarely went beyond the environs of Ashurst, but the beauty of the woodland lured her on, and she passed through a large gate and sauntered slowly along the winding path over which the arching trees cast a flickering shade.

The fear which had lain so heavily at her heart was in a measure set at rest, for several months had passed away since the three years ended, and she had heard nothing of Martin.

As they drew to a close, for the first time she would have asked to leave Ashurst for a season, but the increasing infirmities of the squire compelled her to forego her own wishes, and she awaited in fear and trembling the advent of the man who had it in his power to ruin her.

If "coming events cast their shadows before," on this day she should have thought of him, but she did not—she felt almost assured that he had given up a quest in which he had no personal concern, and she was safe.

Her thoughts wandered far back to the home of her girlhood: on such a day as this she had walked in the woodland with her first lover, had listened to his avowals of undying affection; had received upon her virgin lips the first kiss of love, and in that hour Mrs. Ashley's heart was full of that past which had been so brief and beautiful.

On the next day she and Frank Wilde were married, and after one little week of happiness he sailed with her father on that voyage which had proved so fatal.

She gained the edge of the woodland, and wearied with the unusual exercise, Mrs. Ashley sat down on a rustic bench which had been placed a short distance from the road, and gave herself up to bitter and unavailing regret for the unprincipled act which had decided her whole future fate.

She did not hear the sound of beating hoofs upon the road; absorbed in her own feelings, she had no thought for what was passing near her, till suddenly a horseman drew up in front of her, and lifting his hat, respectfully asked:

"Will you be so good as to inform me, madam, if the mansion I am near is that of Squire Ashley?" and the speaker peered curiously at the veiled face. She repressed the cry that arose to her lips, and clutching her veil more closely to her face, she tried to disguise her voice as she tremulously replied:

"That is Ashurst, sir, but Squire Ashley rarely receives strangers."

"My business is not with him, but with his lady," was the response. "Does she also seclude herself?"

"She seldom leaves her home, and I scarcely think she will receive you just now, for she has been much of an invalid of late. I see Mrs. Ashley every day, sir, and if you will communicate your business to me, I will inform her as soon as I return."

"That is a cool proposal to make to a stranger, if you are one to me," replied the young man, as he leisurely dismounted and fastened his horse to a neighbouring tree. Then approaching her, he added: "I am fully persuaded, madam, that Mrs. Ashley is before me now—is it not so?"

With sudden fire she asked:

"And if she is, sir, by what right do you address her in this insolent manner?"

"By the right of an old acquaintance, I am very sure. Pray, madam, throw aside your veil, that I may look upon your face once more, and claim you as my old playmate, Margaret Brandon."

Mrs. Ashley visibly trembled, but she steadied her voice and replied:

"Your impertinence, sir, is beyond endurance. If it continues, I will seek with you the presence of my husband, and compel you to explain your meaning. Who is Margaret Brandon?"

"She is only your double, that is all," he retorted, with perfect nonchalance. "If I had not felt sure of your identity before I came hither, the sound of your voice would have set my last doubts at rest, in spite of your efforts to disguise it. Mrs. Wilde, why should you play off this farce with me? Three years since I saw you, and recognized you, in spite of the change in your position. I made every effort to see you again, but was baffled—no matter how. I have just returned from a long cruise, and I made use of my first days of leisure to come hither to unmask you. The confiding old man, who has been made your dupe, shall know you for what you are. You have no right



[HUNTED DOWN.]

to be here—no right to bear his name, and you know it. I little thought such shame would ever come to the daughter of so honourable and whole-souled a man as your father was."

Mrs. Ashley cast herself before him in abject fear. She tore aside her veil, and entreated, in broken tones:

"Pity me, John Martin, and do not destroy me, as you threaten. For the sake of him who was the best friend your orphan boyhood ever had, have mercy on me. Even him whom I have deeply wronged would never crush me as you are doing. Yes, I was Margaret Brandon, then Mrs. Wilde, and now I bear the honoured station of wife to the good old man who lives in yonder house. Have compassion on him, for he loves me! have mercy on me, for I am bound to him by chains of iron! I heard you talking near me on a recent occasion. What you said was intended for my ears I understood full well, and the revelation then made crushed me almost into the grave. But of intended wrong I was innocent. I swear to you I was!"

She stopped, panting and breathless, and Martin raised her up and placed her upon the seat again.

He seemed moved by her distress, and presently said:

"How could you remain in the position you hold as Squire Ashley's wife a moment after learning that—"

She raised her hand deprecatingly, and passionately asked:

"What could I then do but remain where fate had cast me? Oh, John, you will not be so cruel as to betray me—to cause me to be cast out with scorn and contumely from the only shelter I can claim on earth? If you can do this, you are much changed from the boy my poor father reared. If he could rise from his grave, he would bitterly reproach you for meddling with what you do not fully understand."

Martin seemed deeply to feel this appeal, and placing himself on the seat beside her, more gently said:

"This appeal to the memory of your father shall not be made in vain, Margaret. I will spare you, and leave you to such happiness as you can find in the degrading shackles that bind you to this superannuated old man, if you will tell me what you have done with poor Frank's child. On my last cruise, I met with a man named Hunter at Oporto. We struck up an intimacy. I told him who reared me from boyhood, and afterwards procured me a berth as midshipman in the navy, and incidentally spoke of

Frank Wilde. The name struck him, and the mention of it led to his telling me of his acquaintance with you, the destitution in which he found you, and your employment as nurse to the daughter of some wealthy man. When he mentioned the name of Ashley, I knew at once that I had not been mistaken—that the woman I had seen, who was the wife of a man old enough to be her grandfather, was indeed the playmate of my childhood."

He paused; but Mrs. Ashley made no reply, and hurriedly went on:

"Oh Margaret! Margaret! why have you done this? You have ruined your happiness for the enjoyment of wealth—lost your own self-respect, and forfeited the esteem of every true man or woman. But why do I reproach you? It is not my right, and if you are the same girl I once knew so well, your own self-reproach is sufficient punishment."

"It is—it is," she moaned. "Do not add a straw's weight to the load I have to bear, or the additional burden will crush me."

"I will not, poor girl, for you were not one formed to err with impunity, and your own conscience will suggest all I could say. But where is the child? Hunter told me that you had given her to some rich woman. Tell me where I may find her, for it is my right to claim and protect her, until—"

Mrs. Ashley had by this time partially recovered from her overwhelming emotion, and she tremulously replied:

"The child is dead. It is true that I gave her to one who would have provided handsomely for her, but she died before she was a year old."

Martin fixed a piercing glance upon her; he saw that tears were ready to gush from her eyes, and he gave credit to her assertion; with a deep sigh he said:

"Then the last link that bound you to the past is broken. Since you have chosen your own fate, I have no right to interfere; neither can I make up my mind to disgrace the daughter of the man who made me what I am. Are you happy in your bondage to that aged man, Margaret?"

"I am as happy as I dare ever hope to be. Squire Ashley is good and true; he loves the very ground on which I step, and he lavishes on me all I used to say would make me happy in my childish days," she sadly replied. "Oh—he is far too good for me."

He regarded her in silence a moment, then bitterly said:

"I remember well your childish pride and vanity—your excessive love of beautiful things, and I can understand that you were ready to sacrifice everything

to their attainment when the temptation came to you."

With some natural fire Mrs. Ashley replied:

"I sacrificed much—much—but not what you think, John Martin. I believed that I had the right to take my fate in my own hands, and I did so. To regret what is irreparable is but a weakness of which I am determined not to be guilty. I have long ago made up my mind to make the most of what I have won by the self-sacrifice I have made. There, we have said all that is necessary in this interview. I must now bid you good-bye, for I shall be missed, and sent for if I remain much later. I regret that I cannot invite you to Ashurst, but you see yourself that it is impossible. A few miles from here is a very good tavern, where you and your horse can be taken care of. You have pledged yourself to keep my secret, John, and I know that I may trust you."

"You may; but you are leaving me without asking a question about—"

"Stop!" she cried out, impulsively, though her voice vibrated with emotion. "I have no right to inquire, neither have I the wish to learn, what you could tell me. Go upon your way, Lieutenant Martin, and never breathe the name of Margaret Ashley in connection with that of the unfortunate Margaret Wilde. If you should again meet Mr. Hunter, mislead him as to my identity, unless you would have the shade of my father arise from the dead to reproach you for the evil you would bring upon the head of his only child."

She waved her hand to him, and hurried away so rapidly that Martin was left in dumb amazement at her words and actions.

After a bewildered pause he mounted his horse, and rode slowly towards the Jolly Angler, musing on the interview which had just passed.

"Umph!" he muttered, "I came here determined to expose her, and she got the better of me, as she always did and always will of any man who is not blind to beauty and fascination. Oh! Margaret, Margaret, the honest love I once offered you was of more real worth than the splendour for which you have bartered all that should have been most precious to you."

Neither Mr. Samson nor his talkative wife could gain anything from their taciturn guest on his return to their roof, though they used all their ingenuity to discover what brought him to the valley, and why he had rode in the direction of Ashurst on that afternoon.

Martin kept his own counsel, and rode away at an early hour on the following morning, in time to catch the train for London.

(To be continued.)



[LOVE'S MESSENGER.]

THE FORESTER.

CHAPTER III.

Alas! by some degree of woe
We every bliss must gain:

The heart can ne'er a transport know,
That never felt a pain.

"Nay, nay, lady," exclaimed the forester, who had promised to search the woods till he should find some trace of her: "I trust you will have a long and pleasant life yet. The lost is found! thank heaven, thank heaven!"

A sudden glow shot over the girl's marble face, and she could only find strength to falter:

"I cannot thank you as I ought—my joy is too deep for words!"

"Noble lady," replied the forester, "I would spill the last drop of blood in my veins in your behalf, and all night I have been searching the woods."

"And how, prithee, did you know I was lost?"

"I witnessed the meeting at the Well, and overheard the conversation of the hunters at your non-appearance. Queen Margaret declared you and Lord Percy had left her some time previous; and there was considerable jesting about lovers' slow pace and various matters, which mayhap you understand better than I."

Again the girl blushed, and her companion went on: "Finally Percy rode into the glade alone, and her majesty questioned him with regard to you: but not till your riderless palfrey sent a thrill of alarm through every heart, and the king called upon him to explain, did he acknowledge the truth."

"He did acknowledge it then?" said the girl, feebly.

"Yes, he confessed that you had rejected his love, and he had been so indignant at your refusal as to leave you unprotected in the forest. I immediately joined the group, and offered my services to Henry, promising to find you, living or dead, if you were in Windsor Forest. Lord Percy and two gentlemen belonging to his majesty's retinue, have been scouring the woods in different directions, but have given up the task as hopeless and gone back to the castle. Lady, it has been my pride and pleasure to find you, but I would have given much could I have saved you from the miseries and perils of a night in the wilderness! What you suffered may be better imagined than described."

"Yes, yes; I shall never forget it, sir forester, as long as I remember anything! Be assured I do not envy you the companionship you have here, nor

such bitter train of thought as swept over me while I lay wakeful and restless, yearning for the dawn to break, that I might resume my toilsome march."

"Your face tells a sad story, and could he gaze upon you now, I am certain Lord Percy could not forgive himself for having exposed you to such dangers, such weariness."

The girl's countenance grew grave and thoughtful, almost stern, as she exclaimed:

"Heretofore I have thought him a gentleman, but now I am undeceived. I would not risk my life's happiness with a character like his."

There was a brief silence, and then the girl resumed:

"My poor father must be wild with anxiety, for I am his all! I must not keep him waiting, but hasten home as fast as possible."

"Lady, you are by no means able to continue your journey," said the forester; "your head and hands are sadly lacerated."

"Ay, I have truly trod a path of thorns," rejoined the girl, with a smile, which gave her face something of the archness it had worn the previous morning; "it was weary work forcing my way through the briary shrubs with which the woods abound;" and she extended her hands, crimsoned here and there with tiny streams of blood.

The forester clasped them with respectful courtesy, plucked a few leaves from a healing plant that grew near, and bound them over the wounds with the girl's lace kerchief. Then he looked up at her and said:

"Methinks you must be suffering much from your head, for it is severely gashed. If you will glance in a pool hard by, you can see for yourself."

Valeria started and cast an earnest look into the crystal mirror he had pointed out to her, and shivered with sudden faintness, as she faltered:

"Thus far I have had no time to think of these injuries, but my head must have struck a stone when I swooned, and fell from my saddle."

"When and where, dear lady?"

"Just after Lord Percy left me well nigh stunned by his parting words."

"And what were they—may I presume to ask?"

"That I had slighted his love and wounded his pride, and," he added, "if my love is ever transformed to hate, woe be to you, Valeria Lyndhurst."

The forester seemed deeply moved, and his broad chest heaved when he exclaimed:

"A most unpardonable threat. I do not wonder at your swoon; but not to terrify your father—let me bind up your wounded head."

The girl bent towards the forester, and taking off the red sash which girded her grey tunic at the waist, he wound it about her brow, murmuring:

"I am but a sorry surgeon for so fair and delicately reared a lady as you."

The girl's eyes drooped as she rejoined:

"You seem as gentle as a woman, sir forester, and as bold and brave as Coeur de Lion; and such characters are few."

The forester smiled, a smile which gave a new beauty to his fine face, but as he was silent, the lady once more proceeded to express her gratitude, and request that he would guide her homeward.

The forester lifted hunter's horn and blew a shrill blast, at which summons a boy appeared, leading two horses.

"This lad has been the companion of my search," observed the stranger; "sometimes we have ridden, and sometimes walked, as best suited our purposes. An hour ago I stationed him at a short distance, telling him that when I needed him I would give a blast of the hunter's horn I always carry."

"You too deserve my thanks," exclaimed Valeria, glancing at the boy; "you seem shy and ill at ease in a lady's presence."

"He is a timid lad," said the forester, apologetically, "and more accustomed to the society of wild birds, deer, and woodmen than ladies, and does not know how to bear himself towards Margaret of Anjou's maids of honour."

"I would far rather find him thus than as bold and dippant as many of the pages at court, who think more of their gorgeous livery, and curled and perfumed hair, than filling their heads with useful knowledge."

"The beautiful speaker laid her hands softly on the boy's shoulder, and tried to obtain a better view of his half-averted face.

"Lady Valeria," exclaimed the young man, "will you now mount the palfrey I have provided?"

As he spoke, he gracefully bent to assist her, and placing her dainty foot in his extended hand, the girl soon found herself in the saddle.

"I will not leave you till you are safe in the courtyard at Windsor Castle," said the forester; and mounting his own steed, he rode on by her side.

A slight breeze stirred through the greenwood; birds once more sang their matin hymns, and the deer began to return to the haunts from which the chase had startled them, drinking from rocky brooks or still pools, and guiding the unwary feet of the young fawns where the most delicate herbage grew.

The ride through the forest was not in the least

tedious to Lady Valeria, weary as she was, for the forester proved a most entertaining companion. It was evident he had acquirements beyond his position in life, and was not only well versed in English history, but in that of Greece and Rome.

Listening to him, Valeria Lyndhurst forgot that he wore a forester's garb, and involuntarily yielded to the charm of his society, admiring his well poised and cultivated mind, his clear judgment, and his keen wit.

At length the dim old woods were left far behind, and they journeyed forward through the pleasant open country, which had never appeared so fair to the girl. England's sky had never seemed half so blue and cloudless, nor the sunshine so glorious, nor the lark's song so sweet as she warbled like a rejoicing Peri at the very gate of heaven.

Suddenly the forester started, and exclaimed :

" See, see, lady, there are some knights riding to meet us ! "

" The foremost of them is my father," replied the girl, leaning forward and gazing in the direction indicated by her deliverer.

" Poor old gentleman," cried the forester; " what a sight he must have passed ! "

" Ay, my heart has been full of him during my lonely vigils in the wilderness. If he were able, I knew he would mount and ride to my rescue; but he is in delicate health, and I had not thought him able to mount his steed—much more to ride thus far."

" Love can bear great burdens, make great sacrifices, Lady Valeria," observed her companion, speaking with a significance of which she was afterwards reminded, in language that thrilled every pulse of her being.

There was no occasion for a reply, as they were now interrupted by her father's well known voice, shouting :

" Ho, there, good forester, bring you any tidings of Lady Valeria Lyndhurst ? "

And the old man strained his gaze through the cloud of dust which concealed the girl from his sight.

" Yes, yes," was the response which came back to his yearning ear; " a few moments more and she will be in your arms."

" Not dead, I hope ? "

" Nay, nay, God forbid—she is able to tell her own story, too, my lord; and is not suffering, save from fatigue and some slight wounds."

The next moment the Earl of Beaufort reined in the charger, which had borne him on many a battlefield during the reign of Henry VI., beside Lady Valeria's palfrey, exclaiming :

" Found, found—my child, my hope, my only treasure—the blessed Madonna and all the saints be praised ! "

With these words he wound his arms convulsively around the girl, her head sank upon his breast, his lips trembled on her brow and cheek, and the rich waves of her chestnut hair, and both were speechless with joy.

Finally, however, the earl continued :

" All night I have been in a high fever; the court-leech was called and administered sleeping potions, but I could not rest. I told them it was madness to think of repose when you were lost and exposed to the perils of yonder forest. Valeria, you have been delicately reared; the wind has not been allowed to visit you too roughly—how fared it with you alone in the wilderness, with only the bare possibility of meeting the foresters stationed to protect the King's game ? "

" Dear, dear father, it seems as if I had lived an age since I left you yester-morn," rejoined the girl, gravely; " they have, I dare say, told you of Percy's proposal and subsequent conduct ? "

" Yes, child: it was hard to believe it of Richard Percy, but he has been at my feet since, begging my forgiveness."

" Did you grant it, my father ? "

" No, I am not yet generous enough to forgive the great wrong he has done our house; but do not let us dwell on that. I am anxious to learn what befell you in the forest."

The young girl then related the incidents that had transpired after Percy had left her in the wood path; her fall from her palfrey, the flight of the animal while she lay senseless, her weary walk through the wood, her utter sense of desolation when night closed in and she found escape impossible, and how slowly the hours dragged by when in her leafy covert she had watched for the dawn.

" When the morning broke," she faltered, " I resumed my journey, but I was faint and sick at heart, and was sinking to the ground once more, declaring I should die there alone, when this forester came to my relief. He told me he had witnessed the scene at the Hatters' Well, when the party felt anxious concerning my fate, and promised the King to find me, living or dead, if I were to be found in Windsor Forest."

" What do I not owe him ? " cried the old man. " What is his name, that I may ever after hold him in grateful remembrance and reward him as he deserves ? "

" Indeed, I cannot tell you, for I have not asked the question."

" How remorse you have been," exclaimed the old earl: " I hope you have not forgotten to thank him, child."

" On the contrary she has overwhelmed me with thanks, and had she inquired, I should have given her a simple name—Robert Markman."

The nobleman extended his hand with a cordiality which told that he, too, had for a time at least, lost sight of the mere circumstance of rank, and poured forth his gratitude with that eloquence which men employ when their hearts are thrilled to the profoundest depths, adding :

" You shall not lack a friend while Reginald Lyndhurst lives, or go back to the forest without some slight testimonial of the regard in which I hold you. Take this, I pray you," and he held out a purse heavy with gold.

" Nay, my lord, I cannot accept it. A good deed brings its own compensation, and if I have restored your treasure, the light of your household, the joy of your old age, it is enough for me."

The earl attempted to urge it upon him, but the forester was firm, and he was obliged to relinquish his purpose.

" We will part company here," said Markman, " you have no further need of me, and bidding you God-speed on your homeward journey, I will leave you."

" Nay, not so; since you will not take my gold, you must go on with us to the castle and receive the thanks of Queen Margaret for restoring her maid of honour."

Still the stranger hesitated, and said half-playfully :

" Robert Markman is better adapted to his majesty's forest than the court of which they tell me Lady Valeria is the brightest star. Do not endeavour to transform me into a hero, my lord."

" Believe me, sir forester, you were born for a hero," exclaimed the earl, and finally Markman yielded to his entreaties, and the strong temptation to remain in Lady Valeria's presence.

" Be assured, my lord," he replied, with grave courtesy, " I am not unconscious of the honour you do me; as you wish it, I will not refuse your kindness, but follow you at a respectful distance."

" By my faith, young man," resumed Beaufort, " you are to-day on an equal footing with me. Ride at my daughter's bridle rein, and do not take a menial's place when I owe her life to you."

The forester obeyed, but the faint glow which deepened into crimson on Valeria's cheek told that his companionship was not unwelcome, even to a brilliant and admired maid of honour.

At length they struck into the noble park, which sweeps around Windsor Castle like fairyland, and after a brisk gallop, reined in their horses in the courtyard described in our first chapter. Eager faces appeared at the quaint windows; white kerchiefs fluttered from fair hands, and cavaliers were grouped here and there, awaiting the arrival of the travellers, who had been espied from the highest watch-tower.

" Rejoice with me," cried the Earl of Beaufort, waving his hat round and round his grey head in triumph, " the lost is found ! "

" This is indeed good tidings," was the response of the Lord Chamberlain as he hastened down the castle steps; " welcome, welcome back, Lady Valeria."

The young cavaliers pressed forward to utter their greetings and congratulations, and while the ceremony was going on, the old earl said :

" To you brave forester I owe my child. It is Robert Markman who restored her to me, and were I a king I would knight him for the deed."

" I do not wonder at your gratitude," replied the Lord Chamberlain. " Prithee, when did you find her, young man ? "

" Not till this morning, my lord; she passed the night in the wood."

" Poor lady," murmured his lordship; " her face shows how much she must have endured in the lonely forest of Windsor. Some of our cavaliers sought for her till late into the night."

" And who were they ? " interposed Lady Valeria.

" Gerald Archer and Jasper Da Vere ! " exclaimed two standing near; and they continued in a whisper, " we envy you tall forester the happiness of finding you ! But we must not detain you when you must be faint and weary—go in ! "

As they spoke, they drew back on either side, and through the passages thus formed, Valeria Lyndhurst passed into the castle, leaning on her father's arm, and followed by the forester.

On entering a little audience chamber, where the king and queen were whiling away the hours which

must intervene before dinner, Henry VI. held out his hand, and said :

" Sir forester, you have kept your word and restored a lost daughter to her father, and a bright jewel to our court—grief and care are swallowed up in joy, and it is well we should manifest our delight. Ho, there ! idle pages, fly to the tower and bid them ring the castle-bell. Fling the escutcheon of Beaufort to the breeze, and kindle bonfires on the hills, while our royal lady thanks Robert Markman for bringing back her lost maid of honour ! "

All was now a pleasant stir within and around the castle; the bell sent forth its merriest peals; the Beaufort colours floated in the wind, and fires glowed red and warm from the picturesque height on which the royal residence stood.

Meanwhile Robert Markman found himself indeed a hero; the king and queen were loud in their praises, the courtiers came flocking in to congratulate him, and the Earl of Beaufort regarded him with grateful interest.

Henry VI. even condescended to invite him to the state dinner, which was to be given that day, but though the old earl seconded the invitation, the young man steadily declined.

When he at length took his leave, the nobleman followed him into the vestibule, and out upon the terrace, exclaiming :

" Friend, you are far above your present position, and deserve to be promoted ! If I were to speak the word I could obtain you a commission in the royal army, and eventually make you one of the king's guard."

A sudden glint shot into the forester's eyes, and he replied :

" For the present I prefer to be plain Robert Markman, and protect his majesty's game."

" Strange, strange ! " muttered the earl, and the next moment he was gone.

When he found himself alone, his cheek burned, his lips quivered, his whole frame shook, and it was evident a terrible storm was passing within.

" Aha ! " he muttered, and his voice lost the musical tones which had thrilled Lady Valeria's young heart, as he went on—" I should be the last man to sit at King Henry's table, to seek aggrandizement from him ! True, I wear his livery, and act as his forester, but for my own purposes; not as a loyal subject proud to live on his bounty. God knows my earnings have been given to the poor, and I am not indebted to him for shelter or food. Upon my honour, my friends would laugh to find me fighting for, or standing guard to the Red Rose of England ! " He paused an instant, and resumed: " Mayhap they would deem it most perilous for me to fall in love with the daughter of a Lancastrian noble, and a maid of honour to that accomplished intrigante, Margaret of Anjou, but 'tis my destiny. I met my fate when I first saw her struggling in the surf near that royal villa by the seaside. I have risked much to win her smile, but life is not life without her. Ah, I wonder if the hour will ever come when I shall dare throw off disguises, and tell her what I have hazarded for her sake."

Soliloquizing thus he spurred onward, leading the palfrey which had borne Valeria to the castle, and lost in thought. The gorgeous sunset burned and faded in the west; the tranquil hour of the gloaming came and went; night with trailing garments swept through her marble halls, but he heeded none of these changes. Finally, just on the verge of Windsor Forest, he encountered a majestic figure, muffled in a loose cloak, and wearing a Spanish hat, which gave him a foreign aspect.

" Hold," cried Markman, " or I shall report you to the head-forester; we allow no poaching among the king's game."

" Ay, good forester, I care more for yourself tonight than all the deer and hares in England. See ! and for an instant, he held up a white rose.

" St. George, I know you now ! " replied Markman; " wait till I return these horses to their owner, and then meet me by yon lightning-scarred oak."

" I will," responded the visitant; and while the forester moved on, he sat swaying the pale rose in his long, slender, symmetrical fingers.

Finally he arose, and stalked toward the tree which had been pointed out to him by the woodman, and beneath whose leafless boughs he was standing.

" Is it safe to hold a confidential interview here ? " inquired the visitant; " an interview which, if what passes between us were betrayed to Henry, might cost us our lives ? "

" I fear not, but I can conduct you to a way-side inn, where the landlord is true to our cause, and would not breathe a word to save his own head."

" Lead on, lead on, but in these troublous times it is necessary to be cautious; and it might bring your character as a forester into disrepute were you to be seen walking away with a stranger. I will join you soon, for I shall keep you in sight."

Markman nodded assent, and an hour later they sat

In a little room, whose greatest recommendation was the strict privacy they could there enjoy.

The small windows were furnished with shutters, and the door with a heavy bolt; and the light of the candle the landlord had brought in flickered over the dark walls, the sanded floor, the rough chairs and table, the quaint hour-glass, and the faces of the two men sitting *vis-à-vis*.

"My boy," exclaimed the elder of the gentlemen, flinging off his Spanish hat, and casting a scornful glance at the forester's costume, "such gear is not for you, and I cannot tell you how it irritates me to see you wearing it. They told me once you had lost your faith in our cause and gone over to the House of Lancaster."

Markman's cheek burned, as he muttered:

"You did not believe that slander, my lord?"

"Nay, I declared it utterly false, asserting that if you were outwardly a Lancastrian, you were not in heart attached to the interest of an usurper, and the foreign woman who rules him and England too. But what, prithee, could have induced you to assume the garb and station of a menial, and even stoop to wear the royal livery? Be candid, my boy, for I like frankness. Did you come as a spy?"

"Not entirely, my lord."

"What then was your object?"

"Something like a year ago, the state of his health drove King Henry to the sea-side. Of course, the queen accompanied him with her maids of honour, and one of them, the most beautiful creature at court, and it seems to me in the wide world, was well nigh drowned in the surf. She had risked her own life to rescue a child to whom she was tenderly attached, and had it not been for my strong arm she would have perished in the whirling waters. That hour revolutionized me, sir. I could not forget her, and therefore I have exerted efforts, at which you may smile, to obtain a casual glimpse of her face or hear the sound of her voice."

"And this drove you to debase yourself to Henry's service—you, whom I designed for a better fate?"

The young man bowed, and he went on:

"Who is your divinity?"

"Lady Valeria Lyndhurst, the only child of the Earl of Beaumont."

"A rank Lancastrian, lad. What blindness, what folly, when there are so many ladies who wear the white rose, ready to lend an ear to your wooing!"

"My lord," murmured the forester, "I knew you would be pained and astonished, but you have been in love, you have had a happy wedded life, and therefore I appeal to your sympathies."

The visitor's stern features softened, and he continued, while a smile hovered about his well cut lips:

"Ah! you know where to touch my heart, lad, and you need not fear to trust me. I would have given much to prevent such a mishap as your falling in love with a maid of honour to Margaret of Anjou, but since the die is cast I must fain make the best of it."

The young man's face was full of emotion as he recounted the particulars of his meeting with her, when he had found her whip and cap, his protracted search for the poor girl when lost in the woods, her restoration to her father, and the warm welcome and earnest praise he had received at Windsor Castle.

After their mysterious conference was ended they stole cautiously from the inn, and with a hurried farewell and a low toned

"Be true to the White Rose Chief!" they parted.

CHAPTER III.

It were all one,
That I should love a bright particular star,
And think to wed it; she's so much above me!
Shakespeare.

A WEEK had passed since Lady Valeria's return to the castle, and one evening, feeling too weary to join the revellers in the ball-room, she sauntered out into the fine, old garden. Gorgeous flowers which take their rich tints from autumn sunshine, blossomed in the parterres; pears and apricots, and great, purple damsons hung from the boughs above, like the fabled fruits of Hesperides; and the luxuriant grape-vines were heavy with luscious clusters, while the fountain's spray and the moonlight which bathed everything in its splendour, rendered the scene far more enchanting.

Valeria had paused in a spot where she fancied she might be secluded, should any of the guests take a promenade in the castle grounds, and sinking down on a garden-seat beneath an apricot tree, was soon absorbed in thought.

She had not been there long when she heard a restless step; to and fro, to and fro it paced, and at length advanced to her.

The next moment she stood face to face with Lord Percy, and recalling his conduct when he had left her amid the perils of Windsor Forest, she drew hastily

back. His face looked grave and haggard, and there was an unnatural glitter in his eyes.

"Lady Valeria," he exclaimed, "ever since your restoration to your father, I have been an exile to the castle, for I could not bear to meet you. To-night, however, my pride is humbled, and when I saw you in the garden, I resolved to come and have a moment's speech with you at least. You blighted my hopes and rejected my love, but it was both ungenerous and unkindly to leave you alone in the woods. Here on bended knee, I beg your pardon."

And he knelt before her, and looked up appealingly into her face.

The girl held out her hand to him, murmuring:

"You are forgiven, my lord; since you have confessed your fault, I should deeply wrong you should I withhold my pardon."

"A thousand thanks, lady, I can breathe more freely now. My disappointment was so bitter, my regret so keen, that I did not realize how basely I had acted, till, on reaching the rendezvous, I learned you were missing. The sudden appearance of your riderless palfrey deepened my misery, and I too set off in pursuit of you. Two other cavaliers, belonging to his majesty's retinue, spent hours traversing the woods, but it was reserved for the forester, who was such as object of envy in the morning, to be your good genius the second time."

He paused, reverently lifted her white jewelled hand to his lips, and disappeared.

Lord Percy was then in his most genial mood; the perils to which he had exposed her, the grief he had brought on her anxious father, and the shock her system had received—a shock from which she had not entirely recovered—had swept away his fierce indignation, and he was truly penitent. But he was a man of impulse, high-spirited and revengeful, and subsequent events proved that his repentance had wrought no decided reform.

When he had gone, the girl murmured:

"How I have misjudged Lord Percy! He is the last person whom I expected to humble himself, and nothing could have been more generous than his course to-night. I can never, never return his love, but I may still count him among my friends."

The words had scarcely died away from her lips when another footfall startled her, and Jasper De Vere, one of the cavaliers who had searched the forest in quest of her, moved to her side.

His court-dress told that he had come from the ball-room, and knowing his fondness for dancing, Lady Valeria said:

"I thought you were amid the merry dancers, Sir Jasper."

"Nay, dancing has no charm for me when the Lady Valeria is absent. I have been watching for your *entrée*, but you did not come, and at length Margaret of Anjou declared you would not grace the *fièvre*, but had gone for a stroll in the garden. I have therefore ventured to follow you."

And he proceeded to lay hand, heart, and fortune at her feet.

Once more it was the girl's task to decline a love she could not reciprocate, and after a few moments reflection, the young man asked:

"Do you love another?"

Lady Valeria blushed and shook her head, and De Vere continued:

"I would give much to know who will be my rival, and win a heart, which not even Lord Percy's handsome face nor rare fascination of manner can move."

"That the future must reveal," was the low reply.

"Valeria, Valeria," resumed the young baronet, "you may frown on me for my boldness, but were Robert Markman your equal, I believe he could teach you what love is!"

The maiden started, her heart beat quick, but she managed to preserve her composure till De Vere had gone back to the ball-room, and then glided back to her room. The moonlight shone through the tall, Gothic window, from which the folds of blue damask had been drawn aside, playing over the fantastic wood work of the casement, the polished floor with its embroidered foot cloths, her great, ebony chair with its velvet cushions, the inlaid cabinet and table, and the lute lying where she had left it, when in a restlessness, for which she could not account, she had fled to the garden. Flinging herself down in a favourite seat, Lady Valeria murmured:

"There can be no harm in looking into my own heart. Am I in love with the forester? Could he win me were he my equal?"

His noble face rose before her with its vivid lights and shadows, its strong evidences of power, its finely-chiselled mouth, which could grow tender as a woman's, or firm and self-reliant with manly strength and courage, and the large dark, expressive eyes with all their depths of unspoken tenderness. She remembered the thrill his words had sent through her frame,

the strange sense of rest and peace she had felt in his presence, and yet Valeria Lyndhurst did not then trace these emotions to their source.

"Nay, I am not in love," she exclaimed. "I am deeply interested in the young forester; the court-circles have lost something of their charm since I met him, but it is worse than madness for me to dream of him. I will try and abjure love and be a dutiful daughter to my father, who seems to be failing fast. Hist! what is that?"

At this juncture she heard a faint tapping against the gorgeously-stained glass of the window, and sprang to the casement; nervously she opened it, and perceived a carrier dove on the massive stone ledge.

The bird looked up into her face, and gave a low murmur which thrilled musically through the grand, old chamber.

It was one of the most beautiful of those rare pigeons, which, before the age of telegraphs and other modern improvements, carried the messages interchanged by the absent knight and his lady-love—the bird to which, in later years, the following sweet song has been addressed:

"Come hither, thou beautiful rover,
Thou wanderer of earth and of air,
Who bearest the sighs of a lover,
And bringest him news of his fair.
Bend hither thy light, waving pinion,
And show me the gloss of thy neck;
Go perch on my hand, dearest pinion,
And turn up thy bright eye and peck.
Here is bread of the whitest and sweetest,
And there is a sip of red wine;
When thy wing is the brightest and fleetest,
'T will be deerer when nerved by the vine.
I have written on rose-scented paper,
With thy wing-quill a sweet billet doux,
I have mailed the wax in Love's taper—
'Tis the colour of true hearts—sky-blue!"

As the strange dove nestled on the window-ledge by which Lady Valeria was standing, she gazed down at it with admiring eyes and saw, not only its delicate plumage, graceful shape and shining beak, but the bouquet of flowers suspended to his glossy neck by a white ribbon.

Her heart beat quick as she drew the dove into the room and untied the ribbon, and a thousand queries flitted through her brain in rapid succession.

"Whence came you, beautiful dove?" she asked softly; "who sent flowers to arouse a poor maiden's wonder, and leave her no clue to the giver?"

The bouquet was composed of wild flowers arranged with exquisite taste, and embedded in lanceolate leaves—just such as she had seen swaying in Windsor Forest.

She was not, however, to be kept in suspense long, for on a slip of parchment, curiously twisted among them, she perceived these hurried lines:

"LADY VALERIA.—This is the last day I shall serve Henry VI. as forester, and as there is neither more opportunity to bid you farewell, I send the only thing which I love in Windsor Forest to bear my parting message. You may deem me presumptuous, but I venture to offer the dove and these few wood blossoms as keepsakes, and should you treasure them as I could hope, were I your equal, I should be happier than a crowned king. In all my wanderings your memory will follow me, and if we never meet again till the solemn mysteries of the eternal world shall be unfolded to both of us, my dying prayer shall be for your welfare. May heaven grant your life sunshine and roses, with but few of its shadows and thorns, and through the perils of these stormy times, may good angels guide, guard, and defend you! To me there is one blessed consolation, and it is that in the land beyond the grave distinctions will be levelled, and high and low meet as equals; then, then you will see in its true light the devoted heart of

ROBERT MARKMAN."

Trembling in every limb, Valeria Lyndhurst read the above; the crimson came and went upon her cheek, and a mist of tears gathered in her large, brown eyes.

Sinking down on a heap of cushions, she buried her face in her hands, and once more abandoned herself to thought.

Though gentle blood flowed in her veins, and she had hitherto been ranked as the proudest as well as the fairest of Queen Margaret's maids of honour, a strange sense of loss and loneliness stole over her as she murmured:

"He is gone, then! how I shall miss him when I go again into the green wood! How gallantly he acted his part the day of our meeting, and when he ministered to my wants on that memorable morning! To him I owe my life, and why, why must Destiny stand between us, declaring he is no match for a Lyndhurst? His message has taught me that my interest in him is not friendly regard, but a deeper, holier emotion. Jasper De Vere was right. Robert Markman is unquestionably dear to me, and it costs

me a keen pang to know we may never meet more on earth!"

Soiloquizing thus, the girl rose, and unlocking a cabinet in a remote corner, placed the wood-flowers within a secret compartment, and with the bird perched on her slender wrist, bathed its plumage in the tears that fell like summer rain.

The next morning her father, who had grown much more feeble since his exposure, and his extreme anxiety in regard to her, came sauntering into her chamber.

The girl hastened to arrange the cushions of the great ebony chair for him, and placed his cordial and the old missal, which he was fond of looking at, at a convenient distance.

The earl sank wearily into the chair, told his daughter, for the hundredth time, what a dutiful daughter she was, and asserted, with a broad smile, that nobody in the land was worthy of her, and he was glad she seemed in no haste to leave his protection.

At length he spied the dove, and exclaimed :

"What have we here, daughter mine?"

"A carrier pigeon," was the low reply.

"Does it belong to your royal mistress?"

"Nay, father."

"Whose is it, then, and whence did it come, Valeria?"

"It is a stranger, and came and perched on my window-ledge last night, pecking softly against the pane, as if it would fain enter."

"How singular! There must be some mystery connected with it, child."

"At first I thought so, but on closer examination, I found attached to its neck by a ribbon a slip of parchment which explained all."

She paused, and her father continued, while a smile flashed over his pale and furrowed face :

"Upon my word, a new lover must have taken this method of telling you what his lips dared not breathe."

"List, and I will tell you, my dear father. Robert Markman, the forester who did me such signal service, is about to leave his present post, and before quitting Windsor, he sent me the dove which has aroused your curiosity, thinking that I might like to keep it for my own."

"Tis a beautiful bird," observed the old man; "and methinks I have often heard you wishing for one to fill the place of the pretty dove you lost."

"Yes, father; have you any objection to my acceptance of the kind forester's gift?"

"Nay, child, nay. Hush! what is that?"

The girl bent her graceful head to hearken, and replied :

"The queen's bird-call, summoning her tiring-women to the royal presence."

"Go, go, my daughter; let her not wait for Lady Valeria."

As he spoke, the girl knelt to receive his kiss, and then hastened away.

(To be continued.)

NOT A LYING LIST LIKE THE CONFEDERATE LOAN ONE.—William B. Astor is 65 years old, worth fifty million dollars (ten million pounds), a round-faced, pleasant, quiet-mannered gentleman, on the cloudy side of 60; owns two thousand dwellings, and is a lenient landlord. Commodore Vanderbilt is white-haired, red-cheeked, 70, worth forty million dollars; drives a fast horse, keeps a fast boat, controls two fast railroads, companies with fast men, and gives away his money very lavishly. A. T. Stewart is 60, thin, nervous, dignified, worth thirty millions, and liberal in cases of benevolence which appeal to his sympathies. August Belmont—twenty millions, coarse, stout, 50, and very German. George Opdyke—five millions, 50, but looks younger; an agreeable gentleman. James Gordon Bennett, proprietor of the *New York Herald*—five millions, 73 years old, dignified in manner, broad Scotch accent, benevolent to the poor.

SHORTNESS OF TIME IN DREAMS.—One of the most remarkable phenomena connected with dreams is the shortness of time needed for their consummation. Lord Brougham says that in dictating a man may frequently fall asleep after uttering a few words, and be awakened by the amanuensis repeating the last word to show he has written the whole; but, though five or six seconds only have elapsed between the delivery of the sentence and its transfer to paper, the sleeper may have passed through a dream extending through half a lifetime. Lord Holland and Mr. Babbage both confirm this theory. The one was listening to a friend reading aloud and slept from the beginning of one sentence to the latter part of the sentence immediately succeeding; yet during this time he had a dream, the particulars of which would have taken more than a quarter of an hour to write. Mr. Babbage dreamt a succession of events, and woke in time to hear the

concluding words of a friend's answer to a question he had just put to him. One man was liable to feelings of suffocation, accompanied by a dream of a skeleton grasping his throat, whenever he slept in a lying posture, and had an attendant to wake him the moment he sank down. But, though awakened the moment he began to sink, that time sufficed for a long struggle with the skeleton. Another man dreamt that he crossed the Atlantic, spent a fortnight in America, and fell overboard when embarking to return; yet his sleep had not lasted more than ten minutes.

A HAB THE WITTY.

CHAPTER II

RAOUL MORNAY was conducted to one of the turrets of the tower by the Moorish knight.

The apartment in which he found himself had been occupied in times of danger by men-at-arms.

Many evidences of the uses of the place still remained.

"It is a rough lodging that I offer you," said Abdallah, "and falls far short of your merits. Yonder couch you may perchance find hard, but of late I have slept soundly on worse. Should you need attendance, strike the bell hanging near that embrasure, with the marten that lies near it."

"I have often cast myself upon the ground in my armour, and slept soundly," replied Mornay. "I have long injured myself to hardship, and can, without complaint, forego the luxuries of life."

Abdallah lighted a lamp, and was withdrawing, but paused at the door, and looking searchingly at the Knight of the Red Cross, asked :

"What think you, Sir Raoul, of my sister?"

The knight's face flushed to his brow.

"That she outshines every star of beauty that it has been my fortune to see!" he answered, with more earnestness than he intended. "By this sacred cross," he touched the handle of his sword, "I affirm, and will make good the affirmation on foot or on horseback, that she is the fairest creature that man ever looked on! This I dare assert, and will maintain."

"Your views have changed in a manner little short of miraculous! I should be wanting in candour if I did not warn you to keep your thoughts from playing truant with your judgment. She is a pearl not to be had for the asking, nor to be worn by one of common degree. Her faith is not thine; and thou wilt not soon become an apostate!"

The Knight of the Leopard pronounced these words in a fashion observably dignified and earnest, then with a stately parting salutation, passed from the turret, leaving Mornay in an eddy of doubt, love, and wonder.

Instead of divesting himself of apparel, and courting the pillow and sleep, he paced the watch-tower with nervous trepidation, thinking of the superb vision that had dawned like a sun upon his senses.

Her heavenly eyes, her finely-arched brows, her peerless mouth, her matchless figure, her unapproachable grace, faithfully remembered, filled him with emotions impossible to describe.

He forgot the history of her people; he forgot the dark prophet; he forgot the reproach that rested on the vengeful Moalem; he forgot his mission; he forgot the conquering banners of Spain, and was conscious of Leoline only.

Her name was softest music, and recalled ideas both of delight and torture.

For the first time in his life, he felt the conquering power of woman, and as he paced to and fro, renewed his vows of fealty to the sweet sex.

So lost was he in absorbing meditations, that he scarcely noticed the entrance of Ahab the Witty, bearing a tray laden with refreshments.

It was not till the Moorish youth addressed him that he deigned to pause and give him attention.

"Food and wine for the Frank," said Ahab. "May his lordship enjoy it to the satisfaction of his stomach and the joy of his palate."

"Thou here!" said Mornay.

"Why not?" quoth Ahab, coolly, placing the tray on a table. "I am not scarce anywhere. Nobody marvels at seeing me. My wit and my legs find me strange companionship. I am at present thy serving-man."

"A thing I did not know of," replied Sir Raoul, dryly. "Be good enough to inform me, worthy Ahab, who made thee my servant?"

"Who should it be but myself?" returned the youth. "I have taken upon me that office; and by the aid of the prophet and other invisible gods, I mean to dis-charge the trust with all acceptance."

"They have strange ways of doing things, methinks, within the bounds of Granada."

"Some persons," returned Ahab, "do as they like, and some do not; but it is all the same!"

"You are of the first, I suppose?" answered Mornay.

"Your lordship is right! And belonging to that favoured class, I can say things with immense confidence. I shall serve you very faithfully, always being ready to consult my own pleasure first and yours afterward."

Ahab arranged the contents of the tray without once condescending to notice his new master, or appearing in the least doubtful of his position.

"I had supposed," said Mornay, "that the master usually chooses the servant instead of the servant the master."

"A common error," quoth Ahab. "You are not the first that has fallen into it."

"I am most happy to be enlightened in a manner so convincing."

"No happier, my master, than your servant. But let your lordship waste no words. Sit down and fall to. What I bring is simple, but it will renew the strength."

Sir Raoul, who had been ravenously hungry a short time before, was now comparatively without appetite, his mind pertinaciously feeding on the charms of Leoline, the Moorish maiden.

He sat down at the table, and began to question Ahab, but not in a fashion to evade his penetrating perceptions.

He endeavoured to extract some information concerning her rank and present position, but the replies of the youth were vague and unsatisfactory; or, if they produced any impression, enhanced the mystery with which she was already invested.

Finding he could extort nothing definite from Ahab, he signified his desire to be relieved of his company.

"Certainly, my master! I'll leave you, but will be near if you should want me. It is all the same!"

Left to himself, Mornay tried to sleep, but tossed restlessly upon his couch.

The fatigues of travel and battle could not so far overpower him as to make him forget Leoline.

It was in vain that he struggled against this new invader—it was in vain that he endeavoured to fix his mind upon the enterprise before him. It was in vain that he recalled the thought of other fair ones—it was in vain he looked for that mental shield of strength that he had so recently boasted of—it was in vain that he resorted to every device of an inventive imagination.

Leoline was before him in whatever direction he turned his eyes. Leoline was in his brain, in his breast—in his thoughts, in his aspirations.

In short, Leoline drifted continually in and out of his fancies, assuming a thousand pleasing shapes, till he was ready to believe himself the subject of magic arts.

The watch-tower took the aspect of a diviner's laboratory; and, as if to carry out and fulfil the conception to the letter, the door opened and the diviner himself appeared, to the unspeakable astonishment of Sir Raoul.

The person who entered was an old man, with flowing silver locks that reached to his shoulders, imparting a look exceedingly venerable.

He wore a loose black robe, that fell quite to his feet, which were shod with sandals. His eyes were blue, his features noble rather than otherwise, and his expression that of grave and thoughtful melancholy.

He carried under his arm a large, antique volume, closed with a broad iron clasp; while in the other hand he held a staff or rod, engraved with curious characters.

He was followed by a boy about twelve years old, bearing quaint and mystic instruments, together with a small astrolabe and an extraordinary lamp in the form of a coiled serpent, with jets of flame streaming from the eyes.

This singular conceit aided not a little to deepen the impression of the visitation in the mind of Mornay, who was so much amazed at the spectacle, that he lay like one paralyzed, motionless, and speechless.

The magician, for such indeed he seemed, advanced to the table with slow and measured steps, his mind abstracted, apparently, from every object but his occult occupations.

Seating himself, he opened the antique volume, and placed it carefully on the table; while the lad, with the utmost reverence, arranged what he had brought within his reach.

The old man made some signs, muttered unintelligibly, bent his head three times with solemnity, then read a few paragraphs from the book, in a strange tongue.

"Zegrin," he said, anon, looking at the boy, "art afraid?"

The magician's voice was clear and impressive.

The boy made a submissive bow, and answered: "Great master, my heart is not strong, but I will abide the result."

"Child, nothing shall harm thee! Trust in me. Trust in my art. Trust in my control over the ele-

ments of mid-air and the elements of mother earth. Trust in the sacred circle, the muttered invocation, and the potent prayer. Bare thine arm, and give me some drops of thy blood."

Zegrin held forth his arm; the magician made a slight puncture with the point of his dagger, and caught the red stream that began to flow, in a vessel.

When he had procured enough for his purpose, he stanch'd the diminutive wound, and continued his preparations, unconscious, to all appearance, that a third party was present, noting his movements.

Into the crucible containing the blood he poured an amber-coloured liquid from a vial, after which he added some small resinous balls.

This done, he heated an iron rod in the fiery jets of the serpent's eyes, and ignited the mixture, which burned with a green flame, emitting a pungent odour.

"Art strong, Zegrin?" he asked.

"Master," replied the boy, with a profound genuflection, "I am weak. I shrink from the dread mysteries of the cabala."

"Zegrin, swallow this."

He gave the boy a green lozenge from a silver box.

"Dread master, thy slave does thy behest," answered Zegrin, and swallowed the lozenge.

"Thou shalt presently be strong. This lozenge contains the very essence of life. It imparts the wisdom of Mohammed and the joy of the seventh heaven. It is the Gate of Paradise. Enter! What thou seest do not fear."

"Great Abaddon, I hear but to obey! Thine art has given me wings! Already I have supernatural sight! Forms begin to fit; shapes come forth in shadow!"

At that moment a strong light appeared at the highest window of the watch-tower, where the watcher was wont to stand when waiting the approach or movements of an enemy.

Mornay could not see whether there was really anything there, but the illumination continued some moments.

"Zegrin, tell me of the Spaniard and his aggressions. Will the Alhambra fall? Will the refusal of the fierce old king to render the degrading tribute of sixteen hundred captive Christians, or in lieu of them, the same number of Moors, to be reduced to the condition of slaves, and two thousand pistoles of gold, call out in full strength the armies of King Ferdinand?"

Sir Raoul heard these questions with intense curiosity.

"Wise Abaddon, you have asked nothing that yonder spirit of air"—he pointed to the window—"cannot, through me, answer. But I am bidden not to speak. Ask something else, oh, Abaddon! Nay, pause. Query not. See you, we are not alone. An unbeliever is listening; a Frank and an enemy. Turn your eyes and discover him."

"I did feel his presence, but attributed it to another cause. I will not turn my head to see a score of Christians! Unbeliever, what wouldst thou here? Answer truly, or not at all; for to Abaddon, the magician, no one may safely lie."

"By my knightly honour, and by the love I bear to lady knight, I swear I have a mind to punish thy audacity!" exclaimed Mornay, arising. "You forget that you address an English knight, who brooks no insolence from mountebanks and itinerant magicians."

"Zegrin, who is this irreverent dog? How long ere Muley Aben Hassan will have his head?"

"Sovereign lord, I may not lie to one who commands the spirits of air, the spirits of mother earth. This is an English knight, who seeks honour and glory under the banners of Spain. He is on the way to the Alhambra. Two accidents have befallen him: one, an ambuscade; the other, love."

The anger of Mornay subsided in a moment. The two truths that Zegrin had uttered were so pertinent and undeniable, that astonishment took the place of indignation.

"What means this mummary?" he asked, but in a voice so changed that it could not but be perceptible.

"A lady, fair as heaven's brightest star, sweeter than the breath of roses, haunts the heart of the Frank," answered Zegrin, in a low and musical voice.

"If I admitted this silly tale, and should ask you, most perspicacious youth, how the adventure would speed, what answer wouldst make?"

"Ask me and see," said Zegrin.

"Consider that I have."

"Then I reply that many obstacles stand in your way, but your wishes, though difficult of attainment, may not be utterly futile. There is one condition on which you may obtain the hand of the Moorish beauty," responded the youth.

"Name it!" said Mornay, quickly.

The magician rose and drew a circle around Zegrin, murmured a few words close to his ear, touched his lips with his rod, and said:

"Zegrin, answer the Christian knight!"

"Great master, I hasten to obey. Find the apartment where your entertainer sleeps, and stab him to the heart!" answered the boy.

"By St. Jago, your impudence exceeds belief! Never heard I laugh so base as this. There is more danger that I shall crop your ears, or throw you from the battlements of the tower, than that I should perform an act so unworthy of the spurs I wear. You and your sage master mistake English honour."

The Knight of the Red Cross frowned and grasped his sword by the scabbard, half inclined to beat the youth with it.

"But thou art but a child in the hands of a vile mountebank." Then, to Abaddon, who maintained his composure in a remarkable manner: "Take up the implements of thy jugglery, and go hence!"

"Listen, proud knight, to what the youth may yet say," he did, tranquilly.

"You did not entirely comprehend me," added the boy. His calmness equalled that of his master. "I mean, that while the Knight of the Sleeping Leopard lives, you cannot receive the hand of the fair lady Leoline."

"If he lives till he die of false and traitorous act of mine, he will remain on earth till the end of time," answered Sir Raoul, with a contemptuous glance at the magician.

"A fortune is once offered to every man; yours is now within your reach; let it slude you, and it is lost for ever!" continued Zegrin, looking steadily into the face of Abaddon, without displaying the least emotion or change of countenance.

Mornay could not but regard these two unequally-matched beings with interest.

How the boy had obtained his knowledge respecting his state of feeling toward Leoline, he was at a loss to imagine; yet he had touched, with singular adroitness, a chord that vibrated within him most sensitively.

What meant this intrusion and infamous proposition?

"That fortune can never be desirable that is purchased at the price of knightly faith. I never meet foeman, save with lance and sword, battle-axe and marteal. Never would I kneel at the feet of a lady with my hands stained with a mean and inglorious action."

Then, directing his discourse particularly to Abaddon:

"I have heard the mummary of this youth long enough for my pleasure. I would now fain have a taste of your own wisdom. You seem, in truth, a magician."

Abaddon gave the boy a small lozenge from another box; he swallowed it submissively, and with a sigh and a shudder returned apparently to his normal condition.

"Where are those same spirits of air and of nether earth that you were going to summon before you? Give me proof of your vaunted power," said Sir Raoul, with a sneer.

"Whatever my art can do, I need not call before me the swift and subtle inhabitants of air or earth, to tell thee enough to indicate the way to future greatness. I perceive by that inspiration of wisdom that often possesses my aged frame, that three persons will much affect thy life and fortune. One has the power to bestow riches and honour; another, love and beauty; the third, disappointment and misery. Now, if the last should meet with his death 'twixt this and the rising of the sun, your advancement is sure, both in arms and love. Nay, bend not thy brows on me, for I speak truly. As for thy mission to the King of Granada, I predict its utter failure. It is reported that Muley Aben Hassan has sworn by his beard and the bones of the Prophet that he will dilate no more Moors to be made slaves in tribute to King Ferdinand, according to the usage of his predecessor."

The concluding remarks were not without effect upon Raoul Mornay. He paused a moment, and answered:

"How you learned the nature of my journey to the Alhambra I know not; but it shall give you no advantage over me. Whether my mission fail or succeed, it shall be faithfully performed."

"You push from you the open hands of fame, and turn blindly from the flowery pathway of successful love. So be it! Allah judge between us! It was but a cut and a thrust; a turning aside of a little current of blood. The hour is passing. The invisible horologe of fate is ticking away the opportunity for ever. Decide, and quickly!"

"With me, old man, it is a decision foregone. A Knight of the Red Cross spurns such temptations with unutterable contempt! Far better to perish, piecemeal, of wasting love, than obtain happiness in the perfidious manner you mean. Away, sir, away! Your hairs are grey and your aspect venerable. I would respect age, but I hold treachery in inexpressible abhorrence!"

"The clock of destiny has ticked the last instant of your opportunity," replied the magician, arising with much dignity. "To a phantom of honour you have sacrificed what you adore. We shall meet again: it is so written, and what is written must be fulfilled. The stars, the occult elements, and the leaves of destiny, cannot lie. It is well, haughty Christian! You may break lances; but know that your own heart will break, if you be not more than human. Farewell, till our life-lines again cross each other!"

Abaddon took up his book, Zegrin gathered up the implements he had brought, and holding aloft the serpent-lamp, followed his master reverently from the watch-tower.

CHAPTER III.

RAOUL MORNAY witnessed the departure of his strange visitors with varied emotions.

Full of thought, he retired to a window commanding, on a clear day, a vast extent of country, now shrouded by the curtain of night.

He looked down upon the court and the wall, and the silent sentry-boxes perched upon it.

While thus gazing, strains of delicious music were wafted to his ears.

His instincts at once assured him who was the singer. He leaned from the battlements with fluttering eagerness, in an earnest endeavour to distinguish the burden of the song; but could only learn that it was in the Moorish tongue.

His heart swelled within him, and his chivalric nature confessed the power of woman.

He mentally vowed to perform deeds that should render him worthy of winning her favour.

As he looked at the scene beneath, objects grew more defined, and he presently discerned figures moving lightly and stealthily to and fro outside the wall.

What these movements portended, he knew not; but the singing having ceased, he gave his entire attention to them.

Anon, scaling ladders were placed against the wall, and about a dozen armed men mounted and dropped noiselessly into the court.

Sir Raoul now began to apprehend that this boded no good, and had an appearance of mischief calculated to arouse well-grounded suspicions of treachery.

He could see the glister of their weapons as they crouched on the earth, with their faces to the tower.

Soon one detached himself from the party to reconnoitre.

The secrecy and silence of the whole transaction plainly indicated that this was a visit unexpected by the inmates.

He was on the point of descending to inform Abadallah of what was occurring, when Ahab the Witty came in unbidden, with a step somewhat quicker than usual.

"I have not called," said Mornay, coldly.

"It is all the same; I can come just as well without calling. Does your worship like a bout now and then? If so, take your sword and come with me," answered Ahab.

"To what purpose? I would know thy meaning better," said Sir Raoul.

"While I stop to explain, the mischief will be done; the Lady Leoline carried off, and her brother murdered," added Ahab, with marvellous serenity.

"Why saidst thou not this before?" cried Mornay, snatching his sword from the table. "Lead on boy; and if thou liest, I'll cleave thy head from thy shoulders at a single stroke. Haste—run—fly!"

"Too much haste, your lordship, is sometimes as dangerous as too much delay."

"Do not trifile with my impatience, for I am not wont to be over tender with the froward and self-willed. Have a care of your neck."

"My neck has but one bone in it, and my head will remain upon it as long as Allah pleases; if, however, it should chance to tumble off, I shall go to the paradise of the Prophet. So you see I have every reason to be indifferent about the time of my death. Life has a great many inconveniences, and we are not certain that death has any. Besides, I owe the man-at-arms, Kalif, two pistoles, which I should get rid of paying if I should happen to be cut into two pieces."

"The fiend take thee and thy pistoles. Give me more of thy legs and less of thy tongue," exclaimed the knight.

"Silence is necessary in this adventure; therefore your worship will please observe it after we are on the way."

Mornay looked again from the window and saw the armed men gliding toward the tower.

He unsheathed his sword, and turned fiercely upon Ahab, who, with a lamp in his hand, began to move. He preceded the knight down the stairs, at the foot of which hung from a hook a Moorish scimitar, which he buckled to his side.

"Where sleeps the lady?" demanded Sir Raoul, eagerly.

"Thou'lt find out soon enough, I'll warrant; for, by Allah, a maiden will scream so when there's danger, that you may hear her a mile off."

"Provoking dog," muttered Mornay. "Conduct me to Abdallah."

"Thou art going to him as fast as is prudent. It's a poor firelock that goes off of itself. Never fear that I'll not give your lordship plenty of work."

"Not so fast as thy heels will go, saucy Ahab."

"That will be as heaven wills. I shall run if it is so written, and I shall fight if it is so recorded, and it will make no manner of difference."

At that moment Sir Raoul heard piercing screams and the clashing of arms, and ran toward the sounds with the swiftness of an arrow. Ahab kept at his heels.

When he reached the apartment where he had seen Leoline, he found Abdallah defending himself against three men, who pressed upon him fiercely, while three others had seized the lady, and were leading her away in spite of her struggles.

Maddened by the spectacle, he attacked them with great impetuosity.

Seizing the nearly fainting Leoline, and placing her upon a divan, he hastened to the aid of Abdallah, and perceived, to his astonishment, that Ahab had already disabled one of the assailants, and was in fair way to do the same service for another. But, meantime, the remaining six had come in, so that now there were eight opposed to three, and one of the three a mere youth.

It was a proud moment for the Knight of the Red Cross.

The eyes of lady bright were on him. He was doing battle in the presence and for the safety of the most beautiful maiden in the world.

The thought inspired him with the strength of Hercules.

All the chivalry in his nature was awakened. He glowed with knightly fervour. He threw himself against the Moors, and they bit the dust. His sword gleamed like lightning. No hand could parry his thrusts or evade his blows.

In a few moments, with the aid of Abdallah and the strange youth, Ahab, victory was won; and the Vermilion Tower was in their undisputed possession.

CHAPTER IV.

Born Mornay and Abdallah stood grim and panting, leaning on their swords.

Abah only maintained his coolness and composure. He contemplated the dead and wounded as if such sanguinary deeds had been his business from childhood.

"It was decreed," quoth he, "that we should smile them."

Then to Raoul: "Your worship has done wonders this night, but you could never have despatched this business without me."

"Let the bodies be removed," said Abdallah.

A groom and two servitors now ventured to appear, and hastened to obey this order.

Abdallah turned to Mornay.

"Knight of the Red Cross," he said, "thou hast proved thy title to thy spurs in a manner no noble gentleman can gainsay. Without the aid of thy doughty arm, I should be now but a dead man, and yonder fair lady a prisoner, reserved for what sufferings Allah only knows. White-headed sage and wise astrologer predicted, long ago, that my life was dangerous to the safety of Granada, in consequence of which I have been sorely beset by one in power, on whose kindness I have some claim. I may not yet divulge my secret; but the man who calls himself Abdallah offers thee the hand of friendship."

"It is accepted, gallant Moor. I have but now seen thee do brave work. Thou art skilful in the use of that Damascus blade. It descends as swiftly with the foe as the fire of heaven discharged from a cloud. Thou shouldst receive the accolade from King Ferdinand himself, for I swear thou art worthy!"

Abdallah smiled, and lifted himself haughtily.

"I like not thy master," he answered; "he is brave and wise, but crafty and cruel. He keeps not faith with the Moor."

"Thou art wrong," said Mornay. "It is the Moor that regards not treaties, and repudiates solemn compacts. Is not the annual tribute of sixteen hundred slaves and two thousand pistoles withheld, though often demanded?"

"It was a most infamous treaty!" exclaimed Abdallah, earnestly. "Who would condemn young girls and tender youth to perpetual bondage in the land of the Cross, without lamentations and tears and undying remorse? I appeal to thee, Sir Raoul Mor-

nay, if it be just; if it be humane; if it ought longer to be borne?"

"Courteous Moslem, thou askst a hard question of one whose sword and lance are devoted to Spain; but if I must answer, nothing but the truth shall pass my lips. I do hold that the agreement was disgraceful to those who acceded to it. I maintain that the conquered had not sufficient regard for their own honour, and that the conqueror exacted ungenerous terms."

"Sir Raoul, thou speakest well! I have great respect for thy integrity. But of these subjects we will not discourse. The time is past when I could mend or make in this matter. Let us attend to my unfortunate sister."

"She is very well," said Ahab, "and her bright eyes were on you both while you dealt with these traitors."

The manly cheeks of Raoul flushed with pleasure.

"It is not strange that we gained the victory," he said. "The presence and danger of a lady so lovely would nerve the weakest arm to deeds of high enterprise."

"Thou art as ready with thy speech as with thy sword. Come and receive her thanks."

Abdallah took his hand and led him to Leoline.

"Sister," said the Moor, "behold your brave defender. But for his invincible arm, our most unnatural foe would have prevailed. I should have perished, and you have been conveyed you know not whither, to suffer you know not what. Sister, what a misfortune it is to be born unlucky! They have done well who called me El Zogoybi, or the unfortunate."

Leoline, who was greatly agitated, arose from her recumbent position with some embarrassment, and disengaging a red scarf from her person, presented it to Sir Raoul, who, dropping on one knee, received it in the most reverent manner.

"Fairest of ladies," he said, in a subdued voice, "I accept this as a most precious gift! Not all the treasures of earth and sea would possess the value in my eyes of this favour. I will wear it in the hour of battle and danger. It shall go to the field where lances are broken. It shall flutter in the fierce career, and by the help of God, come safely from the deadly shock of opposing arms. It shall admonish me at all times of my fealty to ladies bright and chivalric actions."

"Your tongue is agile," interposed Abdallah. "Your courtly phrases far surpass my poor ability. Arise, and cease to pour forth these fine things. No one can doubt your courage, and when next you gallop to the tented field, no prouder favour will flutter on the breast of gallant cavalier. Arise, and consider thyself fortunate."

Then to Leoline: "Thou art royal in thy gifts. Sir Raoul will be the most envied knight in Granada."

"The poor gift of an ell of Cashmere but ill requires the high deserts of this English knight. He has done his devoir right well this night; and I thank him for life and liberty preserved," answered Leoline, with humid eyes.

"Name it not, lady! The consciousness of having served you gives me a pleasure that more rewards me. I swear by the holy cross, emblem of my faith, that I esteem myself most lucky. With this precious token"—he knotted it over his shoulder—"I shall undertake any adventure, however hazardous, assured of victory."

"You could spare it better than sword or lance," said Ahab. "For my part, I should infinitely rather have something more substantial; for instance, something that I could eat and drink, or that would keep me warm, or to fight with. This may answer with belted knights, godships, and worshipers, and other kind of ships; but it never will do for Ahab the Witty, and the hungry."

That melancholy smile, which Mornay had more than once observed, flitted over the lips of Abdallah.

He looked kindly too at the youth, much to the astonishment of Sir Raoul, who had anticipated that he would be severely rebuked for his familiarity.

"This is an eccentric lad," said the latter. "I expected that he would run away at the first meeting of steel; but he displayed as much courage of his inches as any of us."

"I fought because it was written. I deserve neither praise nor blame. Nothing happens by accident. Had it been decreed that I should run, I should quickly have found the use of my heels. It is all the same!"

"You have a philosopher in your household," said Mornay, smiling.

"Philosophers, like poets, are philosophers born. Ahab has his own way and his own wit, and is often useful, and on this account enjoys peculiar privileges. Remain here, Sir Raoul, while I go to make some observations without. I can no longer feel secure in this old fortress, for my enemy is not of a disposition to allow me the least immunity from danger, after

having learned my hiding-place. We are fugitives and wanderers, with the curse of a terrible prediction upon us. Alas! whither shall we direct our persecuted footsteps? Where shall we find safety and secrecy? What cavern is deep enough to hide the luckless Abdallah?"

The Moor pronounced these words with much feeling. Leoline was deeply affected.

"Be not disheartened," she said, in a tender voice. "Heaven will find some way of relief. You will yet be restored to your own. Call to your soul the dignity and firmness which the occasion requires. Courage, vigilance, and cunning, united, may yet extricate us from these difficulties. Go and attend to your duties, and let your brave friend accompany you to aid you by his advice and ready discernment. Look from the battlements to see if other enemies approach. See that none lurk within the precincts of the tower. Search every nook large enough to conceal an assassin. I make not these suggestions so much for myself as for you; you who are destined for a name and place in the history of Granada. If it be needful, my brother, fly and leave me. My life is but of small worth and consequence when weighed in the balance with yours."

"Incomparable sister, you bring me to a sense of my own manhood. I will bear in mind who and what I am. As for the curse of hoary soothsayers, I will endeavour to regard it as the shallowest device of knaves and mountebanks. When I fly from thee to save life or liberty, may Allah fly from me!" responded Abdallah, with more dignity and feeling than he had yet manifested.

"Come, Sir Raoul," he added, "let us attend to the seasonable suggestions of my sister. If there are no enemies in sight by morning, we may, I think, remain here till I can find a safer retreat."

"If you take my advice, you will not so much as move a finger," said Ahab, "for, everything having been determined beforehand, you can neither mend nor make by anything you can do. If the stars doom you to the dagger, to the dagger you will go, fly in what direction you may. It is impossible for one to die till the very hour and instant of his time arrives. Go and throw yourself headlong from the watch-tower, and my word for it, you will jump up as blithe as a cricket if your stars haven't marked that day as your last. All events should be looked at with the greatest indifference. Let come what will, it is all the same!"

(To be continued.)

THE SKELETON OF A GREAT-GRANDSON OF ST. LOUIS.—The skeleton of a great-grandson of St. Louis has been discovered by workmen who, under the superintendence of M. Havard, were employed in levelling the site of the ancient Abbey of Val Dieu, at Longry, the said great-grandson of Louis IX., having been no less a personage than Peter II., Duke de Alençon, surnamed the "The Loyal." Near his tomb were found the bones of his daughter, Jane of Valois, who died in 1401, three years previous to her father.

L'EXTINCTEUR.—There has lately appeared an instrument called an "extincteur," which occupies the mind of every man seriously desirous to see useful inventions brought out. In accordance with a request which had been made for the public to be present, a great number of persons assembled on the banks of the Seine, at the foot of the bridge La Concorde, when some experiments took place. A number of fires were extinguished with incredible celerity, amidst the unanimous plaudits of those present. A commission was afterwards formed among the distinguished gentlemen present, who were impressed with the value of the invention. They immediately continued the experiments by setting fire to two rough buildings, which formed a real conflagration, the flames of which soon rose more than thirty feet high. One single extincteur and a few quarts of its contents sufficed to extinguish the roaring flames in thirty seconds. The enthusiasm of the public was manifested by the incessant and hearty bravos, promising a success to the extincteur which it well merits.

Tour of Europe in a CANOE.—Mr. J. Macgregor, of London, has been a lengthened tour through Europe by means of a light boat, passing along several of the rivers and lakes. The tour has now been accomplished with success, the vessel used being a small canoe, the Rob Roy, built of oak, and furnished with sails. After descending the Thames, and rowing along the Meuse, the Rhine, and the Maine, the boat was carried through the Black Forest for an excursion on the Titisee, and thence to the source of the Danube, which the tourist descended for a week through magnificent scenery, much of which is quite unknown, as it is accessible only in a boat. Leaving the Danube at Ulm, the Rob Roy went to the Lake of Constance, and sailed through it to the Zeller See, and so down the Rhine to Shaffhausen. Reaching Zurich by railway (the canoe being carried as baggage) the voyage was continued through that lake and on Zug and

Lucerne, from which the canoe descended by the rapid Reuss and the Aar, after successfully paddling over the rapids at Bremgarten. The rapids of Rheinfelden being also traversed, the voyage was continued to Basle, and afterwards by canal over Ill, whence the boat was carted over the Vosges Mountains to the Moselle, and descended that river, the Meurthe, and the Marne, so as to return to England by the Seine. Very great interest was exhibited by the inhabitants of the German towns through which the canoe passed bearing the British flag, for in many parts of the Danube above Ulm a boat is utterly unknown.

THE HAUNTED CHAMBER.

SHE was not pretty. A pale, colourless face, overshadowed by great dark masses of hair, coiled up like a serpent. A large, straight nose. White, cold-looking lips, opening to display a set of fine, even, glittering teeth, that set your own on edge to look at. They might tear you, perhaps you would think, when you noted the quivering fire in her eyes, black as midnight.

And yet every one liked Esther Donnie. A quiet girl, people said, who loved her friends, and could never do enough for them. Yet she had a temper, they said, which one had better not arouse.

She was twenty-seven years old when Barton Lanworth asked her to be his wife.

He did not ask for her love. That would come sometime, he thought. She fascinated him—he could not tell how or why; and still, he always felt a chill in her presence. He could not be at ease by her side, and yet he could not tear himself away; and so he proposed in an off-hand business fashion.

He said the same words five years before to another. That one had been laid in her grave two years ago. So he told Esther that he was lonely—would she try to cheer his sad life?

She had not expected that. A cry burst from the white lips, and she hid her face in her hands.

He took the little wee hands in his and looked down into the tearful eyes, and though she did not speak, he knew that she loved him with a love that never would change except in the grave.

And so he kissed the dewy eyelids until she smiled up at him—a glorious smile; he thought she was beautiful then, or at least lovely. She always looked so, in his eyes, after that.

And so they were married. A quiet wedding they had. People wondered at Barton Lanworth's choice, for he was wealthy and handsome, and might have married the most beautiful woman in the land.

Very few marriageable young ladies would have thought it wise to refuse to become the mistress of Lanworth Hall, though they said his first wife died of a secret grief—what, no one knew.

But Esther was happy. She had never been so happy before in all her life. Not that she was mistress of Lanworth Hall, for that would have been a dreary place indeed but for her husband. But she would have been happy with him anywhere.

"What a sad dreary place this must have been for you to live in all alone, with those great bare hills shutting you in on every side."

She was leaning out of the window, looking up at the hills, when she made the remark.

"Yes, it was lonely once," he said, "but now, Esther, while you are with me, it will never be lonely," kissing the pale little face.

She turned to look up into his eyes, but he was gone. She heard his footsteps along the corridor, then a door opened and closed, and the steps were silent.

What was behind that door she had asked herself before, but never had spoken to him about it. She tried it once. It was locked, and no key in her possession would open it.

She had a secret dread of that part of the house. She had thought to ask her husband where that door led to, but her courage had failed her every time, she did not know why.

Once she had searched all over the house for him without success, and then, afterwards, sitting alone in her room, she had heard the clang of that mysterious door, and immediately after her husband had entered the room.

Now she arose, walked across the chamber, and peered out, listened a moment, then went out into the corridor, carefully closing the door behind her. A moment she paused irresolute, then went on. A servant met her at the landing of the stairs.

"Dolly, where does this door lead to?" she asked.

"I don't know, ma'am," the maid replied, in some confusion. "I've never been in there," nodding towards the door.

"And who keeps the key?"

"Mr. Lanworth, I suppose, ma'am. That part of

the house has always been shut up since I've been here."

"Strange," Esther murmured.

"It's haunted, I expect—"

"Haunted?" smiling at the superstition of the servant.

"I've heard strange noises in there o' nights, when I were out in the back garden. Once I saw the glimmer of a light through the blinds. Of course that was the ghosts, 'cause nobody lives there—hush!"

They heard a faint, far-off moan. It grew louder and then died away in a plaintive wail.

"I've heard that before," the maid whispered, turning away and going downstairs.

Esther remained riveted to the spot. She was not superstitious, but that cry, as of despair, made her shudder.

But he was in there, she thought after a moment. What was the mystery? She had a woman's curiosity and a man's nerve.

If she could but explore beyond the door she could have faced the ghosts that the maid spoke of, if there were any to face.

She turned the knob, but the door stood firm, as usual. Well, she could wait and watch.

Walking back through the long corridor to her own chamber, she thought she heard footsteps behind her.

She stopped and listened, expecting to see her husband coming out of the mysterious door. But he did not.

She thought she heard a faint sound of music, away off in the distance, and then all was silent—nothing but fancy, perhaps.

She started back when she entered her own chamber, for her husband was sitting by the window, reading.

He looked up and smiled when she came in. He did not notice her look of surprise, while she asked herself how he could have got there. Perhaps he had not been within the mysterious room at all. She had not seen him go in.

And then she thought of what the servant-girl had told her. Perhaps even he did not dare to encounter what was beyond the old oaken door.

"You are weary here, dearest," he said, placing a chair for her beside him, "and to-morrow I am to leave you."

"Leave me?"

"Yes; but only for a few days, or a week, perhaps. I am going up to London upon business that I must attend to in person. I would take you with me, but I shall be so busy while there that perhaps you would be better pleased to stay here."

"Yes," she replied, "I had rather stay. I shall wait anxiously for your return, Barton."

He smiled. It was worth living for, such a love as Esther's, so he thought. Then his face grew sad again. She wondered why.

"Esther."

"Well."

"There is something that I wish to tell you, but—no, not now." He stopped suddenly, looking out of the window, off toward the brown hills growing dusky in the evening shadows. "When I come back. It's a secret. You knew I was in Italy once."

"Yes."

"My twin brother and I. We resembled each other so much that our friends could hardly distinguish us apart." He paused a moment. "In Venice he lived, he died there. We buried him there, and then I came home."

He ceased speaking. She waited for him to continue, but he did not. He did not seem conscious of her presence, and so, at last, leaving him to wander back in memory over the past, she stole noiselessly out of the room.

Next morning, bright and early, Esther had bid her husband "good-by" at the door, and was standing there watching the carriage roll swiftly away toward T—, the nearest railway station. When it was fairly out of sight around the turn of the road, she shut the door, with a little sigh, brushed a tear from her cheek, and turned back into the house.

"No one but myself to please to-day," she murmured, opening the door of the library. Taking down a book from one of the shelves, she seated herself in one corner of the sofa and was soon lost to all save the contents of the volume before her.

A sigh, low, long-drawn, startled her, it was so near. She looked up—started from her seat, and the heavy volume fell to the floor. Was it only a picture? The eyes seemed to pierce her very soul. Did it breathe? She almost thought so, it was so natural, so life-like. Strange that she had never noticed it before.

She advanced a step and put out her hand, almost expecting that it was really flesh and blood and would recoil from her touch. But no, it was a portrait, exquisitely painted, representing a beautiful young

woman, with long tresses of black hair, flowing loosely down over the white neck and shoulders; with delicately cut features; a mouth like a half-opened rosebud; nose small and straight, the nostrils so exquisitely painted that they seemed to quiver with the breath; eyes dark, luminous, looking straight out at you, following you wherever you went, with such an intense gaze that you could not help but shudder. A peculiar picture, fascinating in the extreme. Esther could not withdraw her eyes from it. "I wonder who it is?" she questioned herself.

The longer she stood gazing at it the more she became impressed that there was life about it.

Repeatedly she touched the canvas—her hand rested upon it for a moment, then that sigh again. She drew back, shivering, looking at the lips, half-opened. Did it come from them? It came from the portrait, certainly.

Pale and trembling, she glanced up at the dark eyes, so luminous, then retreated step by step to the door, opened it cautiously, her gaze still fixed upon the picture; then she threw herself out of the room and closed the door violently behind her, sinking down upon the floor in a swoon.

When she came to, she was lying upon the bed in her own room and Dolly was bathing her temples.

"Where am I?" she gasped.

"Here, in your own room."

"And the—the—portrait?"

"You saw it, then?"

"Who is it? What is the mystery about it, Dolly?"

"Well, ma'am, I don't rightly know. I never saw it but once. I never want to again. Mr. Lanworth told me at the time never to go into the library again. I didn't want to, you may be sure. How do you feel now, ma'am?"

"Better; you can go now, Dolly."

"Yes, ma'am," dropping a curtsey.

After Dolly had left the room, Esther lay with her head upon the pillow and her eyes half-closed, thinking of the strange sounds she had heard, and wondering if they had any connection with the mysterious picture that seemed to possess so strange an influence upon all who looked at it.

Was the house really peopled with phantoms, spirits from the other world, or was there some way to account for these mysteries in a rational manner?

She was not superstitious. She could not believe that those sounds could have been produced by any supernatural agency; but still, there seemed no other way to account for them.

The more she thought the more bewildered she became. A brave woman she was, and she resolved to probe the matter to the bottom.

If she could only gain access to the haunted chamber, she thought she might obtain some clue to the mysteries; but the door was locked and she had no key that would open it.

"Wait, I'll try. Where there's a will, there's a way," she murmured; "but not now—to-morrow, perhaps—I must see behind that door. My woman's curiosity, I suppose. If Bluebeard," she continued, smiling, "had but left the key to the blue-room behind, though with the warning fresh in my mind, I think I should have tried it."

All the long afternoon she could not drive these thoughts from her mind.

She went down to the housekeeper's room, and sat down to chat with Mrs. Wentworth.

Once she thought of speaking to her about the thoughts uppermost in her mind, but remembering how little satisfaction she had obtained from her questioning Dolly, she gave up the idea, deeming it best to work out the solution of the mystery herself.

A sort of secret dread came over her as she entered her chamber that night.

Since her marriage, her husband had never been away from her a single day.

A storm had come up early in the evening, and the sound of the wind and the rain rattling against the windows, and the black dismal night outside made the place seem more dreary than ever.

A fire had been kindled in the grate, for it was the fall of the year, and the evenings were chilly.

The light of the embers made spectral shadows on the walls.

The candle flickered and sputtered and sent up fitful flashes—it made her nervous to watch it.

She got up to extinguish it, but a gust of wind saved her the trouble and left her in darkness.

So, quietly undressing, while the cold chills ran over her as she listened to the mournful wail of the winds, she crept into bed, pulled the clothes high over her head, closed her eyes, and tried to sleep.

But with the sound of the storm without and the crackling of the embers in the fire-place, she could only lie and think, and listen. At last, she fell into a doze.

She could not have slept more than five minutes, she thought, when she was startled by a sound of footsteps in the room.

She lay perfectly still, though her heart beat as if it would burst from her bosom, as she listened to the footsteps softly approaching the bed in which she lie; then all was still again.

Could she have been deceived?

She gathered courage and peered out from under the bed-clothes.

She came near betraying her presence by shrieking, for there, within two feet of the bed, so near that had she put out her hand she could have touched it, was a figure all in white, standing with its face toward the fire.

A heavy mass of long black hair fell down over the neck and shoulders of the spectre—it was evidently a woman—a phantom it surely was, Esther thought, for no human being would enter her room at that hour, in such a plight.

For full five minutes she lay watching this strange being, till at last the spectre turned towards her, the gleaming eyes seeming to look through and beyond her, without realizing her presence. Esther lay as one dead when she recognized, at one glance at the face, the original of the portrait in the library.

Slowly those gleaming eyes glanced around the apartment, seeming to look at nothing, but beyond all; then, at last, apparently satisfied with the survey, the phantom turned away again, glided to the fire, held a small white hand out over the dying embers for a moment, and then, glancing once more at the bed, she went slowly out of the room, the door closing softly behind her.

Esther lay for many minutes, her eyes fixed upon the door, as if expecting the strange lady would reappear; but though she lay awake till morning dawned, bright and cloudless, she saw nothing more of the lady in white.

Then she fell asleep.

It was near twelve o'clock when she awoke, quite refreshed, the memory of the strange occurrence of the preceding day and night seeming more like a dream to her than a reality.

She awoke with fresh courage, determined to probe the mysteries of the haunted chamber to the bottom. First of all she determined to take down the portrait in the library. She might by that means find a clue to the singular sounds, or the cause of them.

After breakfast, with this intent, she went into the library; but remembering the peculiar influence the portrait had exerted over her, she did not raise her eyes to it, but, seizing it with her hands, strove to pull it down; but it resisted all her efforts.

It was fast to the wall.

She searched for the fastenings which held it, but for some time without success.

For a second she forgot herself, and glanced at the beautiful face.

The same wild glare was in the eyes; she shuddered and drew back, but at that moment her fingers touched a spring hidden in the wall, and with a loud snap, the portrait flew towards her.

Shrieking, she fell back, but recovering at once, she saw to her infinite surprise, that the portrait swung on hinges, and was used as a door to a secret passage that lay beyond.

Half the mystery was solved already, she thought.

That the strange sounds had been uttered by a human being she now felt certain: but still there was something singular about it, after all. Within the passage all was dark, she could not see three feet beyond the entrance.

Placing a chair against the door, that it might not swing back upon her, she entered the passage. The air was damp and chill. A few paces further on she came to what seemed to be a flight of stone steps.

She could see nothing in the gloom; feeling along the walls with her hands, she found that the passage led off in another direction, to her left.

She stopped a moment, thinking which way it was best to pursue, and then commenced ascending the steps.

At the top she found herself in a small room in which there was a window and a door. The light struggled feebly through the closed blinds of the window, so she could see the bare walls of the room, and the closed door beyond.

She knew that she must be somewhere in the vicinity of the haunted chamber.

She shuddered when she thought of it, in spite of herself. The remembrance of her last night's visitor rendered her more timid than she otherwise would have been.

While she paused, listening, she heard the sound of far-off music. It came from beyond the door opposite. With a trembling step she walked across the room, and lifted the latch softly.

The door swung gently back, disclosing a large and comfortably-furnished room; but what surprised her more was the sight of a middle-aged woman, lying upon the lounge at the further end of the room, fast asleep, as her heavy breathing indicated.

She glanced at the woman a moment to assure her-

self that she was indeed asleep, and then on tiptoe glided across the room, past the lounge, to a door that stood ajar, and from whence the music she had heard at first, proceeded.

If had ceased now. Esther peered through the half-opened door.

This room was gorgeously furnished. Everything in it was of the richest material. But Esther hardly noticed this; her eyes were fixed upon the occupant of the room, who, seated in a large easy-chair, was intently gazing upon something which she held in her hand.

It was her midnight visitor! No ghost, but real flesh and blood, and beautiful as a hour. Her eyes, which the night before had gleamed with such an unearthly lustre, were now soft and tender.

A smile of ineffable sweetness played upon her face. While Esther watched her, she placed the miniature which she had been looking at so fixedly to her lips, kissed it tenderly, and then placed it in her bosom.

"My God!" Esther groaned, as the truth broke upon her.

She grasped the door for support, and then suddenly recollecting herself, and fearing to be discovered, she turned and fled through the nearest door.

It led into a long hall; at one end was a low window, at the other a door which she hurried towards; a key was in the lock, which she turned; the bolt flew back; the door swung upon its hinges with a harsh, grating sound.

She passed out and found herself in the corridor. This was indeed the mysterious door. She had been beyond it and seen the haunted chamber, had learned the mystery—her husband's perfidy!

In her own chamber again, she threw herself on her bed and tried to think. Her first resolve was to leave the place for ever.

She would go back to her home, and never see her husband's face again. But on second thought she could not forgive him so easily as that. She would be revenged upon him.

He should know some of the misery that she already knew. Ay, revenge seemed sweet to her then; she had thought him all nobleness and truth, and for that she had loved him.

He had deceived her, and now she hated him. Lying there on the bed, her small white hands clasped together, thinking of the great wrong her husband had done her, she worked herself into a perfect frenzy of passion.

"False, perfidious villain!" she cried, starting up, a wild gleam in her eyes, and her cold, pale lips pressed tightly together, "did he think he had a child to deal with?"

Could he have seen her in that frenzied moment, he would have thought her a fiend, capable of anything.

What Esther suffered upon her discovery of the mystery of Lanworth Hall, no one may know. She was capable of the deepest feeling, and her passions, either good or evil, were intense. She had loved her husband better than her own life. He had been all the world to her.

She had been happy in his enjoyment, miserable in his woe.

She had lived in him, and through him, trusting in and loving him, giving up body and soul to this her idol.

Now all the future seemed a blank, not worth living for, only for this, her revenge.

She whispered the word softly to herself—it sounded so sweet to her then. Only to make him suffer as she had done, and then to die: that was all she asked.

Twice during the day Dolly came to the chamber door, asking if she wished for anything.

The last time Esther sent her away, telling her that she need not come again; she could ring if she wanted her.

The night came on; but still Esther lay there on the bed, holding the white face in her hands, never moving, her gleaming black eyes peering through the gloom.

Whatever her thoughts were, she had made a firm resolve, and she would not sleep until she had carried it out.

The little clock on the mantel chimed ten, eleven, twelve, and then she arose from her recumbent posture, and listened a moment to hear if any one was stirring in the house. No, all was still. Not a sound save the beating of her heart and her short, quick breathing.

With a stealthy tread, she walked across the room, opened her dressing-case carefully, and took something from it which glittered in the faint moonbeams a moment, before she hid it in the folds of her dress; then turning, she glided out of the chamber through the door that led into the long corridor.

She stopped a moment to listen, and then went on again, grasping something tightly in the folds of her dress.

The mysterious door which she had unlocked that morning opened noiselessly and then closed.

She turned the key, locking it again, and then continued on down the corridor. Into the same room she had entered that morning, she came again. No one was there. All was still and dark. The next room was deserted also.

She stopped a moment by the large easy-chair in which the strange woman had sat that morning.

By the light of the moonbeams through the window, she saw there was another door upon the opposite side of the room from which she had entered, and she advanced towards it.

It opened into a sleeping apartment, and the sound of heavy breathing told Esther it was occupied. She carefully advanced towards the bed, stopping to look at the sleeper.

A gleam of satisfaction came over her countenance as she recognized by the pale, dim light, her visitor of the previous night, peacefully sleeping, without a dream of danger.

Esther glanced around the room for a moment. On a light stand at the head of the bed was a small gold locket, attached to a chain of exquisite workmanship. Opening it, she struck a match that she might behold the face within. Yes, it was the face of her husband, though she thought it must have been taken some years before. "Before he had seen me," she whispered; "and he loved her then." She closed the locket, replaced it on the stand, and turned once more towards the bed.

The sleeper smiled, her lips moved, Esther put her ear close down to her mouth, heard her murmur "Lanworth," then drew back suddenly.

Just a second she looked down at that wildly beautiful face, all her hate and fury concentrated in her eyes, and then carefully, with a firm hand, she removed the coverlet from the breast of the sleeper.

Raising her right hand above her head, a dagger gleamed, and then, flashing in the moonlight, it came down and was buried to the hilt in the breast bared to receive it!

A green, a sigh, one convulsive struggle, and all was over.

Esther gazed upon the face of the dead woman before her, with folded arms and no look of horror on her countenance. It did not seem to her that she had committed a crime. There was a demon within her, which, when aroused as it now was, could feel no horror at the blackest crime.

At last she turned away, groping her way through the darkness till she reached the secret passage. The sound of her own footsteps on the stone stairs made solemn echoes in the dead of the night; but she heard them not.

Her work was accomplished.

She feared nothing that man could do to her.

Regaining her room, she lighted a candle and proceeded to wash her hands. A few spots she found upon her dress, which she carefully removed. Then, throwing off her clothes, she crept into bed.

"I am revenged!" she said, smiling triumphantly as she laid her head upon the pillow. "But I must see him suffer, and then—yes, then I can die: there is nothing to live for now."

But she could not sleep.

Coming gradually back to herself, as she thought, she began to realize what she had done. Not till then did all the horror of the deed she had committed dawn upon her.

As I said before, in her passion, this woman could perform any act.

Now, her passion and courage had left her, and her mind conceived horrors more dread than the one she had already committed. She trembled at every sound. Her mind conjured up imaginary horrors. Whichever way she looked, through the darkness gleamed the piercing eyes of the strange woman. The laugh of fiends was in her ears, shrieks and groans seemed to have come to torment her before her time. When morning broke she was in a raging fever.

Her husband returned that day, but she did not recognize him. Though he listened to her wild ravings, he never suspected there could be any meaning in her cries of terror. For days her life hung upon a thread. Her husband watched with her night and day, until at last the crisis was passed. She came back, as it were, from the very brink of the grave.

The past seemed all a horrible dream. She could not realize it. Her husband seemed the same to her as of old; she tried to recall the mystery of the haunted chamber, but she could not make it seem a reality.

At last she was sufficiently recovered to be up and about the house. She thought that she would go down into the library that morning. She would see if the portrait of the strange woman was indeed there—if there was really a secret passage behind it. But in the lower hall she met her husband.

"Esther," he said, putting his arm around her and drawing her close to his breast, "I want you to walk

out a little way with me this morning—I have something to tell you. Wrap this shawl around you, dear."

He held her arm in his and led her out into the garden at the back of the house. Walking down the grand path between the trees and the bright blooming flowers, the last of the season, that, kissed by the gentle breezes, nodded good-morning to them, they came to a little grove of maples; seating her upon a rustic bench between two trees, he sat down beside her and drew her head down upon his breast.

"Esther, you have heard me speak of my brother?" he began.

"Yes," she murmured, shuddering, she knew not why.

"We were twins. No two brothers ever loved each other better than Bernard and I. When we were twenty-one we took a tour on the Continent. We spent one winter in Paris, the next in Venice. It was then that we first saw Imogene Galiano—the most beautiful woman, I think, that it was ever my lot to behold. I saw at once that Bernard was dazzled by her beauty—in fact, I think he loved her from the first. His passion was reciprocated; they were all in all to each other.

"It was not without a pang that I saw Imogene daily drawing my brother more and more away from me; but I loved him too well to complain when I knew that he was happy. A more tender and devoted pair of lovers, I think I never saw. The winter and spring passed and still we lingered at Venice. One day Bernard came into my room and informed me that he and Imogene were to be married in the autumn. I congratulated him upon his happiness in store. I was almost happy for his sake, though I was to lose him so soon. Alas! I lost him indeed. A week from that day he was attacked with a malignant fever and died a few hours after in my arms. We buried him at Venice.

"But Imogene—alas! the blow was too severe for her. We tore her away from his dead body, a raving maniac! I had everything done for her that could be, and at last she became more docile, but she never regained her reason. I brought her home with me, for she had no near friends there; but I dared not trust her in the hands of strangers, and so I kept her in my own house. A suite of chambers in the left wing were fitted up for her especial use, and her old domestic was her only attendant. No one else in the household knew anything about her.

"When I came back from my last journey, I found her dead—by her own hand. God forgive her, she knew not what she did."

Esther shuddered but did not speak. The pale face was more white and cold than ever. She prayed that she might die there.

"There is her grave," he continued, after a pause, "but her spirit is now with him in Paradise."

Esther looked in the direction he pointed, and saw a small marble monument, upon which was inscribed only the name "Imogene."

Her husband then rose and led her back to the house in silence.

Could he have looked into the heart of the woman beside him—but no, it was better as it was.

Next morning when he went into her chamber, he found her lying with her face to the wall. He bent over her, tenderly; she did not breathe. He took her hand.

The pulse had ceased to beat. She had passed from this life into the dread unknown!"

N. P. D.

THE returns recently issued showing the causes of death of the seamen of the Royal Navy who died in the year 1862 register as many as 96 deaths by drowning. As the mean force afloat was 58,870 in number, it follows that 16 men in every 10,000 lost their lives in that year, and were lost to the public service by being drowned. Some of these were men drowned while bathing, some from falling into the water from a plank laid from the ship to the shore, from attempting to swim a horse across a bar, and so on; but most of the casualties were from falling overboard.

THE TREASURE TRÖVE.—At the Old Bell Inn, Warwick Lane, now in process of demolition, a large number of "left parcels" have been discovered—parcels for which no owners could be found—many of them having been there, it is stated, for half a century. Some of the articles of clothing, &c., look peculiarly quaint when viewed in the light of the present day. The jewellery discovered is said to be worth £700 or £800. It is worthy of remark that it was at this inn that Archbishop Leighton, the steady advocate of progress, died, in 1684. Burnet, in the "History of His Own Times," relates of the Archbishop: "He often used to say that if he were to choose a place to die in, it should be an inn, it looking like a pilgrim's going home, to whom this world was all as an inn

and who was weary of the noise and confusion in it. . . . And he obtained what he desired." Another of the old booking-offices in the city is also being pulled down, the Spread Eagle, Gracechurch Street, the removal of a portion of which has brought to light a piece of the wall of Leaden Hall.

TEMPTATION.

By J. F. SMITH.

Author of "The Will and the Way," "Woman and her Master," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XXV.

She stands like one who hath lost her way,
And no one near her to inquire it of;
Yet there's a Providence above that knows
The road which all men tread, and can direct
Inquiring justice. . . . Passengers that travel
On the wide ocean, where no paths are.
Look up, and leave their conduct to a star!

Sir Robert Howard.

THE well-filled purse from which he had taken the gold slid from his hand and glided like a snake into his pocket.

That same evening he quitted London, without leaving the least clue by which his name or residence could be traced: the pride of the mercenary, self-righteous man revolted at the idea of being recognized as the brother of the poor dancere—whose fortune, however, he thought it no disgrace to inherit.

The house where Sally Carroll lodged was kept by a retired actress, named Watkins—one of those odd creatures we sometimes meet with in the world whose hearts are filled with kind feelings and prejudices. She had figured as the Duchess of York, with Garrick, in *Richard the Third*—a circumstance of which she was not a little proud, if one might judge by the frequent allusions she made to it—remembered Mrs. Pritchard, and spoke of Gentleman Smith, who married the Countess of Sandwich, as a rising young man in the profession.

She was then sixty, at the very least.

The theatre had been the old lady's world; every feeling, taste, and idea she possessed were in some way or other connected with it; she entertained all its opinions and prejudices: thus she had never forgotten black Jack—as the elder Kemble was familiarly called in the profession—the sin of acting Macbeth in highland costume. Garrick, she used to observe—and he was an actor—wore a laced suit of scarlet and gold; but when Mrs. Siddons abandoned the hoop petticoat, Mrs. Watkins's indignation reached its height: she confidently predicted the downfall of the stage, which she quitted in disgust at the innovation.

Perhaps her seventy-three years—although she never alluded to them—had something to do with her determination.

With the slender savings from her professional career Mrs. Watkins purchased the lease of a small house in St. Martin's Court, which she furnished plainly, and let the principal portion in lodgings: the first floor was inhabited by a retired officer, who had been with her nearly six years; an aged German musician, named Weitzer, and his wife, occupied the second; whilst in the three attics were lodged a young painter, named Barry, Mademoiselle Josephine, of the Opera, and Sally Carroll.

The latter paid but little, but as the mistress of the house used to observe, every little helped.

The ground floor was retained by the old lady and her servant Meg—a tall, gaunt, grey-headed woman, who had been her dresser upwards of twenty years in the theatre, and looked upon her mistress as something little less than a queen, so deeply was she impressed with the dignity of her manner and speech; for Mrs. Watkins, in quitting the profession, had not ceased to be an actress—her language was still that of the green-room: for instance, she never condescended to ask if the rooms of her lodgers had been swept—it was always, "Are the chambers fittingly arranged for their inmates?"

Her own little parlour was furnished with scrupulous neatness, and not without a certain air of coquetry: the half dozen chairs and sofa were covered with the brocades which she had worn upon the stage, the curtains were of embroidered muslin, and the walls covered with portraits of her contemporaries—amongst which was the well-known print of Garrick between Tragedy and Comedy—Mrs. Pritchard, as Lady Macbeth—and her own likeness as the Duchess of York, in *Richard the Third*, as stately as a hoop petticoat, black velvet, gold, and spangles could make it.

The mistress of the house was seated in the room we have been describing, when Sally Carroll arrived with her protegee, each carrying a bundle.

With all her liveliness, Sally stood very much in awe of her landlady, who kept a vigilant eye over her.

The actress knew the world, its trials and temptations—and her lodger was just fourteen.

"You have returned in time!" said the old lady, in a deep tone of voice, such as Mrs. Siddons must have used when she startled the linen-draper by inquiring whether the printed muslin she was about to purchase would wash. "I was about to despatch Margaret after you!"

"If you please, ma'am," replied the girl, "we couldn't come sooner—they would make us stop to tea!"

"We!" repeated Mrs. Watkins, glancing at her companion; "it is rather late for visitors!"

"Yes—it is rather late!" answered Sally, not knowing exactly how to break the intelligence that for the future Fanny was to share her garret with her. "Please, Mrs. Watkins, may I speak with you?"

"Speak! I am bound to hear!" was the reply.

"Yes, ma'am; but I want to speak with you alone!" continued the kind-hearted girl, fearing lest the sensitiveness of the orphan should be wounded by any objections on the part of the landlady—objections which, *par parenthèse*, Sally was determined not to listen to.

"Come with me to my chamber!" said the actress, rising from her seat and walking towards the little back parlour, which she retained as a bed-room; "there we may converse in private!"

Her lodger followed with the air of a child who expected to be chidden, leaving her companion lost in amazement.

She could not comprehend what the stately old lady in faded brocade, her white hair turned over a cushion under a fly cap, could possibly have to do with Sally Carroll.

It was some time before she could believe she was only her landlady.

"Please Mrs. Watkins," said her lodger, as soon as they were alone, "it is Fanny Du Bast!"

"Du Bast—Du Bast!" repeated the old lady; "ah, the harlequin man!" she added, suddenly recollecting that she had read an account of his untimely death in the paper.

"You knew him?"

"I never knew any pantomime people!" replied the actress, drawing herself up with great dignity.

"Her mother is dead, too!"

"I have heard as much!"

"So, if you please," continued the dancer, "Fanny will live with me: she has no friends, and I have promised to take her, and I will pay you a shilling a week more for the rent. And you won't refuse?" she added, seeing that her landlady hesitated; "it is not much, but I shall be able to pay more for her by-and-by, when the winter theatres open!"

To do Mrs. Watkins justice, it was not the smallness of the sum which occasioned her silence, but surprise: she was touched at the devotion and benevolence of the pleader, whose scanty earnings were barely sufficient to find bread for herself. Before giving her an answer, she made Sally repeat to her everything that had passed.

"Some villain, on my life!" she exclaimed, quoting from the once popular but now forgotten play of *The Curfew*, in which she had enacted the heroine in the country.

This was in allusion to the conduct of the gentleman who had paid the funeral expenses of the signora.

"Oh, no!" replied her lodger, warmly; "he was very good and kind! See what nice dresses he has given us! And that is not all!" she added, opening the palm of her hand, and displaying the five guineas.

It was not the sight of the money which decided the actress upon receiving Fanny—for, to do her justice, she had a hand open as day to melting charity; it was the innocence and utter helplessness of the poor little creature left desolate in the world. Had she listened to the dictates of prudence, she would have refused; but her heart was weaker than her head.

"Be it so!" she said; "she shall remain!"

Sally forgot for an instant her habitual respect, her awe of the speaker. Springing to the side of the chair on which she was seated, she threw her arms around her neck and kissed her; then, as if suddenly struck by the enormity of the offence she had committed, stood, with downcast eyes, blushing before her.

"There, that will do!" exclaimed the actress, somewhat tartly. "What manners! But I suppose it's the modern school. I never ventured to do more than kiss Mrs. Pritchard's hand when she commended me!"

"Perhaps you did not love her?" observed the dancer, who began to take courage at the mildness of the reproof.

The old lady smiled as she re-adjusted her cap, and brushed the powder from the lace cardinal she wore over her shoulders.

At Sally's request, she undertook the charge of the five guineas, very properly reflecting that the money

would be better in her care than in that of a mere child.

As for the extra shilling a week for the room, it was rejected with great dignity—and yet the poor old soul would have been glad of it.

When they returned to the parlour, Fanny was introduced by her youthful protectress to Mrs. Watkins, as her new lodger.

The timidity and beauty of the child still further reconciled her to the arrangement. Sally conducted her in triumph to her little chamber, which appeared no longer lonely. She had something to love and exert herself for.

Fortunately the sorrows, like the pleasures of childhood, are but transient.

Fanny gradually recovered from the melancholy which the death of the signora had occasioned, and she became once more gay and cheerful. In the evenings, when her companion was engaged at the theatre, her landlady would invite her to pass the time in the little parlour below, where the actress would teach her to recite passages from Shakespeare, or encourage her to sing—for, in addition to the beauty of her mother, the orphan had inherited her rich flexible voice and exquisite ear for music.

"If I were rich," the old lady would frequently repeat to herself, "what a brilliant education I would bestow upon Fanny."

During these little rehearsals—if we may so term them—Mrs. Watkins frequently heard the door of the drawing-room quietly open.

She knew that the officer in the first floor was listening.

He was one of the few persons she had encountered in the world whom she could not make out. He visited no one, apparently was without friends, for he never received any letters; Meg prepared his solitary meals: he was evidently alone in the world.

A circumstance which rendered him still more to be pitied was, that he was blind.

Every Monday he used to send a polite message to his landlady, requesting she would do him the favour to pay him a visit, when he settled his account. On these occasions little conversation had passed between them, for, whatever his sorrows, he kept them to himself.

Shortly after the arrival of Fanny, he one day asked the old lady if she had not lately received an addition to her family.

"I presume you mean Fanny?" was the reply.

At the name of Fanny, the lieutenant—the only name he was known by in the house—trembled violently.

"Fanny," he murmured to himself; "strange—strange!"

The actress related all the circumstances which she knew respecting her.

To her great surprise, her lodger questioned her very closely on the subject of the late harlequin and his wife—the number of years they had been in the profession—and appeared considerably relieved when she informed him that she remembered them in it for at least ten years.

"I have often thought," she observed, "that the long evenings must hang heavily upon your hands! This child seems to have interested you!"

The lieutenant acknowledged that he did feel interested.

"Why not descend and pass an hour or two with us occasionally?" continued the lady; then, as if suddenly sensible that she had compromised her dignity by risking a refusal, she drew herself up to her full height and awaited his reply.

"You are very kind!" he said, in a hesitating manner; "it is so long since I mingled in society that—but if you will not deem the presence of one so little calculated for the world as myself an intrusion—"

Mrs. Watkins hastily assured him that it would be a pleasure; and he finally promised that on the following evening he would take his tea in the parlour with them.

The old servant, Meg, could scarcely credit her senses when her mistress gravely announced her intention of giving a rout—as she somewhat ambitiously styled the little party to which she resolved to invite all her lodgers: being, to use a theatrical phrase, one of the off-nights. Mademoiselle Josephine, the musician and his wife, and Sally Carroll were all disengaged.

As for the young painter, he had more time at his disposal than any of them, except the lieutenant; he was one of those sons of genius whose battle with poverty and neglect had still to be fought.

Mrs. Watkins's preparations for entertaining her guests were limited to a home-made cake and a couple of bottles of currant wine, red and white, which were duly decanted in the course of the afternoon, and placed upon a little ebony stand in one corner of the room, with half a dozen long-necked glasses beside them.

Several times before assisting the old lady to dress, Meg had to rehearse the ceremony of banding them round, before she accomplished it to the satisfaction of her mistress, who could not proceed to her toilette till that important point was settled.

After a great deal of scolding and hurrying, by five o'clock, in all the glories of her best brocade, she was seated with a volume of Shakespeare before her, ready to receive her visitors. Sally and Fanny were the first to arrive: their appearance chased the last traces of anxiety and impatience which lingered on the brow of their benevolent friend, as with great dignity she extended a hand to each.

"How beautiful you look!" exclaimed the elder of the girls, who was perfectly aware of her landlady's weak points; "what a magnificent silk! and oh, what diamonds!"

The artful little hussey knew that her earrings and brooch were only paste.

"And wax candles?" she added.

"Why, yes," said the actress, with an air of complacency; "when I am at home, I like to have everything handsome about me!"

"Are you not at home here?" demanded Fanny, with the utmost simplicity.

Mrs. Watkins gravely explained to her what was meant by a lady's being "at home" in the fashionable world.

The second-floor lodgers, Herr Weitzer and his wife, next made their appearance. The musician was a little, spare, old man, not unlike the portraits of Voltaire in appearance; his arms were of an unusual length, a peculiarity which he used to boast gave him great command over his instrument—the violin: to compensate for this great excess, his legs were as remarkably short; he spoke but little English—music was the passion of his life.

Although twenty years a husband, he had never known any other—the lady had married him, and he had submitted to his destiny.

The lieutenant and the young painter followed in the list of guests—the latter was a tall, graceful youth, about seventeen.

His features were far from being what the world would consider handsome, yet when animated it was impossible to avoid being struck by the refinement and eloquence of their expression; the brow was large and thoughtful, shaded by chestnut-coloured hair, worn rather long, according to the fashion of the day; the eyes a bright blue.

Although but little accustomed to society, there was nothing awkward in the timidity with which he entered the room and paid his respects to the mistress of the house, who introduced him to the rest of the company.

"Ah! de gentelmen who paints!" exclaimed the old fiddler, whose wife had some difficulty in making him comprehend that the elegant, well-dressed young man before him and the shabby artist he had occasionally passed on the dimly-lighted, narrow staircase were the same person: "I hope mine fiddle does not make much disagreeables to you!"

"On the contrary, I admire Beethoven and Mozart too passionately," replied the painter, "ever to tire of their strains!"

The musician grasped his hand, and declared, in his broken English, "dat dere vas von symphony between dem." Doubtless he meant sympathy.

"Margaret!" said her mistress, addressing the old servant, who, dressed in her best stuff gown, with clean white muslin apron and cuffs, stood at the door, "directly ma'am'selle arrives you will serve the tea!"

"Yes, ma'am, it's all ready, and the toast!"

A frown from the actress told her it was neither the time nor place for her to indulge in her usual loquacity.

The door of the little parlour opened, and Mademoiselle Josephine, of the Opera, made her appearance: she came sliding into the room with an affection which would be considered as highly ridiculous in our days, but was reckoned supreme ton at the commencement of the present century.

Her dress consisted of a showy guaze, cut rather lower in the neck than the old actress mentally approved, and trimmed with a profusion of various-coloured ribbons.

"I knew she would not come till we were all waiting!" whispered Sally to her young companion; "so like her! It's what she calls producing a sensation—she always contrives in the ballet to be the last!"

There was the least possible tone of spite in the observation, just sufficient to prove that mademoiselle was no favourite with the speaker.

After paying her respects to her landlady, the dancer—who was a tall blonde—affected a start—as she recognized Mr. Barry, who did not appear in the least degree flattered by what the French would have termed her *empressement*.

"Ah, Sally, child—you here!" exclaimed the coquette, in a tone which was intended to be patronising, but which only betrayed disappointment.

At any other time Sally, with her usually lively manner, would most probably have retorted, but the eyes of the painter were fixed upon her, attracted no doubt by the exclamation of mademoiselle; the cheeks of the poor girl began to glow, and her eyes were filled with tears. She knew not why—never had she felt so vexed with herself.

"I am afraid," said Barry, good-naturedly, "that you will consider us children out of place here; but our hostess is too kind to omit any of her friends!"

The old actress bowed, and mademoiselle looked at him reproachfully, as if to ask whether he thought it possible she could consider him out of place in any society.

Despite her glances of admiration, the young man quietly took a seat beside Sally, whose eyes began to sparkle through her tears. She had reached that dangerous period of life which separates girlhood from womanhood; in manners, pleasures, and feeling still a child; whilst her life was a dream as yet, from which the first breath of passion might awaken her.

During the evening the wine was twice handed round, according to instructions, by Meg. Mrs. Watkins—the due amount of pressure having been applied—consented to recite a scene from the *Grecian Daughter*, which was received with unanimous approval.

At last little Fanny was requested to sing.

At the first sound of her voice, the blind lieutenant closed his sightless orbs, as if to hide the weakness of which he felt ashamed: the sound had evidently touched some long-forgotten chord of his memory, awakening once more the heart's deep music.

When she concluded he drew her towards him, and imprinted a kiss upon her forehead.

Every one present thought his conduct exceedingly singular; the old actress could not comprehend how any one could be more affected by the singing of a child than her pathetic recitation from the *Grecian Daughter*.

Mademoiselle Josephine simpered and tossed her head disdainfully.

"Mein Gott!" exclaimed Herr Weitzer; "what beautiful voice—quite treasure!"

Knowing his enthusiasm for music, no one paid the least attention to what he said.

The lieutenant released Fanny from his embrace, and left the room without a word of adieu to any one.

"Strange!" said Mrs. Watkins, whose ideas of propriety were very much shocked by his abrupt departure.

"Rude!" echoed mademoiselle.

"With all due respect, ladies," said the young painter, "I think the conduct of the gentleman neither one nor the other; unless," he added, "feeling is strange, or sensibility rude!"

On a nod from her mistress, old Meg handed round the wine and cake for the third time, and the party soon afterwards broke up.

(To be continued.)

MEDICATED WINES AND THE EXCISE.—The tradesmen who deal in quinine and other medicated wines have recently been visited by the officers of excise, and the Commissioners have decided that such wines cannot be retailed unless with the protection of a British wine licence.

DISCOVERY OF HUMAN REMAINS UNDER THE MANSION HOUSE.—Whilst the workmen engaged in repairing the foundations of the Mansion House were proceeding with some excavations, they came across the lower jaw of a human skull in a most perfect state of preservation, having the whole row of teeth quite perfect. The Mansion House stands on the site of a place formerly known as Stocks'—market.

A CORRESPONDENT writes from Mexico:—"On the Emperor Maximilian's birthday, the Empress went in State to the Cathedral. She had a magnificent crown on her head, and wore a magnificent white silk dress similarly worked. The carriage in which she reviewed the troops cost 40,000 dollars; it is all made of glass and silver fretwork, and the columns of solid silver. The inside is lined with white satin and gold lace. The Palatine Guard—all men over six feet in height—followed, splendidly dressed, and making a fine appearance."

THE "GOOD OLD DAYS."—In the last century gas was unknown; men groped about the streets of London in all the darkness of a twinkling oil lamp, under the protection of watchmen in their grand uniform, and exposed to every species of depredation and insult. They were nine hours sailing from Dover to Calais before the invention of steam. It took nine hours to go from Taunton to Bath before the invention of railroads, and we now go in four hours from Taunton to London. We can walk, by the assistance of the police, from one end of London to another without molestation; or, if tired, get into a cheap and active cab, instead of those cottages on wheels, which the hackney-coaches were a hundred years ago; men

then had no umbrellas; there were no waterproof hats; there were no banks to receive the savings of the poor. The Poor Laws were gradually sapping the vitals of the country; and there was no post to carry letters for a single penny to the remotest corners of the empire. The baskets of stage-coaches, in which luggage was then carried, had no springs, travellers' clothes were rubbed to pieces; and even in the best society one-third of the gentlemen at least were always drunk.

WEARING DIAMONDS.

"MISS RAYMOND looks beautiful to-night," said a young man, speaking to a lady who stood near him. I turned towards Miss Raymond, who had not particularly attracted my attention.

The beauty did not strike me, so I listened for the lady's answer.

Touching Miss Raymond's face, let me say that it was of an approved oval, that the features were regular and the complexion good—lips full and ruddy; eyes large, but glassy, rather than what we call brilliant, as if lighted from without instead of from within.

"Her diamonds are beautiful." Ah, said I to myself, as the reply came, ladies are quick to see below the surface, or else apt to deal uncharitably with each other.

"Do you think them more beautiful than her face?" was asked.

"Her face would show to better advantage without the diamonds."

"If I did not know you so well, I would think you annoyed by Miss Raymond's display of costly jewels, or in some way prejudiced against her."

"I am neither annoyed nor prejudiced," answered the lady, smiling on her companion.

"You disapprove of diamonds?"

"No." And she lifted her hand in a careless way, just touching, for a moment, one of her cheeks with a jewelled finger. I saw the sparkle of a brilliant gem.

"Why are they not becoming to Miss Raymond?"

"Because she does not know how to wear them."

"They lie on her bosom and depend from her ears. I see no difference between her manner of wearing them and that of other ladies."

"Perhaps there is not a great deal of difference. Few ladies wear diamonds well."

"Ah, I was not aware of this. Then there is an art in diamond wearing, as in everything else?"

"If you choose to call it art. Certain it is that few women wear diamonds in public without letting sharp observers see a weak side in their characters."

I was interested, and joined the lady and her young friend.

"You are one of the sharp observers," said the young man, smiling.

"I generally see what is to be seen," answered the lady.

"You said just now," I remarked, "that few ladies wear diamonds well. Like our young friend, I must own that the thing is not clear. Wearing diamonds has ever seemed to me a simple matter enough. All the difficulty in the case, to my apprehension, lies in getting them."

"Your difficulty is the smallest," she said. "Any merchant's wife, for instance, whose husband has got rich in selling goods at double the fair market price, may hang diamonds in her ears, and circle her wrists and fingers with them. But the wearing of these choicest of gems in a womanly manner is a very different thing."

"What do you mean when you say in a womanly manner?" I asked.

"I answer, by way of approach to my true meaning, in the word—unconsciously."

"A good actor may appear to do this."

"She must be a good actor, indeed, who does not betray her thought of diamonds, if she wear them ostentatiously, or, in other words, sets a higher value on herself because of her diamonds," replied the lady. "But what I really mean by wearing them in a womanly manner, is to regard them as inferior to personal qualities, mere ornaments that please the eye, but add nothing to individual worth. They should be worn by a lady as other parts of her attire are worn, when she goes abroad, so as to give pleasing effect to her style of person, and to be no more thought of after she has completed and approved her toilette than any other portion of her dress. In company, the graces of mind should be first."

"You remarked that Miss Raymond's face would show to better advantage without her diamonds," said the young man. "What did you really mean by this?"

"Simply that in the expression of her face you read the consciousness of diamonds. Take away the gems, and her countenance will be far more pleasing

to look upon. If you were her lover, as I know you are not, which would you regard as most beautiful, the light of true thoughts in her face, or the reflected light of diamonds? The consciousness of ornament or the consciousness of virtue? Don't understand me as seeking to lower your estimate of Miss Raymond. She has many good qualities, and is far superior to numbers who are here to-night. But she is wearing her gift of diamonds for the first time, and cannot forget their brilliance."

"That would be difficult for almost any lady," said I.

"Or for any gentleman, either," was answered. "Put a thousand-pound pin in your bosom, and wear it for the first time in company, and my word for it, it will spoil the true effect as a man quite as much as Miss Raymond's diamonds are spoiling her true effect as a woman to-night."

Perhaps my tone had, unwittingly, expressed a shade of sarcasm towards the sex, for the lady's voice was a little changed from its soft and even quality.

"I shall not argue that point with you," said I laughingly. "Human nature is very weak, and men, like women, are human. Still, a weakness for diamonds is specially attributed to your sex, and I only spoke in reference to this alleged weakness. No doubt we are infirm in our degree. Very sure am I that the thousand-pound pin your lively imagination furnished would be in great danger of spoiling my effect as a man on the first appearance. The danger, however, in this direction is not imminent."

The lady's remark set me thinking and observing in a new direction. The diamonds of Miss Raymond were exceedingly brilliant.

Every now and then, as she changed the position of her body, or moved about the room, their light flashed into my eyes, and drew my attention towards the wearer.

I soon saw for myself that she was one of those who did not know how to wear such costly ornaments; that they took from, instead of increasing her attractions. Just a little too erect did she carry her person. In her air, movements, tone of voice, expression of face, you could see a consciousness of diamonds.

There were other ladies in the room with jewels as rich. Naturally, in my new line of thought, attention rested on these. I must see whether they knew how to wear diamonds or not. It was a curious study. Mrs. L— had a magnificent bracelet, that dazzled you when the light struck on it fairly.

It was plain, after a few minutes' observation, by the way she carried her arm, that her splendid ornament was never absent from her thought. It was all the while getting into good positions, all the while so exhibiting the diamonds that you could not help admiring their brilliancy.

Now, something drew the tip of one finger to her ear; now her hand rested for a moment or two against her bosom, and now her lace-bordered handkerchief was held to her mouth. The wrist was hardly ever in repose—you saw perpetual coruscations of light.

As an actor, Mrs. L— certainly knew how to wear diamonds, for in all these changes she hid, except from keen eyes, her own unfailing consciousness; but not as a woman, for inversely to their brilliancy shone the jewels in her crown of womanhood.

You saw that she was more desirous to be well esteemed for what she possessed than for what she was.

Now and then, you read her thoughts in her less guarded moments.

You were certain that she was saying to herself:

"My diamonds eclipse all others."

And at the same time you saw real beauty fading from her countenance.

Miss O— had on her bosom a diamond cross. Satisfied in regard to Mrs. L—, I turned my eyes from her, and kept Miss O— under observation for some time.

She had rather a plain, though intelligent face; her eyes were good, and lighted up beautifully when she became animated in conversation.

I soon saw that the large, glittering cross was detracting from the just effect of her countenance, and I also noticed a certain air of constraint, as if she were holding herself in some unnatural position.

With the rising and falling of her bosom, the diamonds sent forth an unceasing flood of rainbow light.

Entering into conversation with Miss O—, whom I knew very well, I found her less interesting than usual.

Her mind, which was good, and very well stored, did not act with its ordinary vitality. Thought fluttered low, and with feeble wings.

"What does this mean?" I asked myself. "Is she thinking about the effect of her diamonds?"

Not once did her fine eyes flash with the brilliancy I had so often admired, and which kindled almost into

beauty her scarcely attractive face. As for the light blazing out from the cross, that threw only shadows upon her countenance.

"I am afraid she doesn't know how to wear diamonds," said I, turning from my young friend, in some disappointment. "Evidently she is thinking about them. She would have appeared to better advantage if she had left them at home."

An opal, encircled with diamonds, rested on a taper finger. The hand was still. I noticed a single gleam of emerald light. The hand had slightly moved. Then a red ray, warm and brilliant, shot out from the jewelled finger—white and violet came next in arrowy sharpness.

Then only the pale green of the opal, holding its concealed fires in its heart, was visible.

"More diamonds," said I, observing the wearer, a woman of thirty, with delicately cut, almost classic features.

She was in conversation with a gentleman, and evidently so much interested as to have scarcely any thoughts below her theme.

The play of light over her face was charming, full of feeling and intelligence.

Occasionally, as her interest increased, she would lift the jewelled hand in some spontaneous movement, and then how the diamonds blazed!

At such times they were, to my eyes, the choicest in that room, adding to the lady's attractions, for they were worn unconsciously.

The hand was so white, and moulded with such symmetry, that the gems increased its beauty.

"I have been examining the diamond wearers," said I to the lady whose remarks had given my thoughts this new direction.

It was near the evening's close.

She smiled, as she asked:

"And how many wear these gems with womanly unconsciousness?"

"Not many," I replied.

"How many?"

"One."

"Only one?"

"Only one, with that perfect unconsciousness which gives them their true effect."

"You mean Mrs. B—?"

"Yes."

"She is one in a hundred. But then Mrs. B— has worn them for a great many years. It is in your recent possessor that you are apt to see the thought of diamonds."

"Mrs. L—," I replied, "might wear them for a score of years, and yet never with the true grace; for it is plain to be seen that she considers herself as having a higher social value in consequence of the diamonds. A poor compliment she pays to her personal worth. But I think society will rate her very nearly at her own estimate of herself, and set down her diamonds as the best part of her."

"Too severe," said the lady. "You are unjust to Mrs. L—. She is weak in a certain direction; but underneath her love of dress and ornament lies one of the kindest of hearts. Mrs. B— is more cultivated and intellectual, and lives in a region of mind above that of Mrs. L—. She cares more for literature, art, and the higher things into which refined tastes enter; but if I were sick, troubled, or in need of a friend, I would go past her, and find in Mrs. L— a warm and sympathetic nature. All have weaknesses," added the lady, "and according to your notion women have a weakness for diamonds; but we must be careful how we set weaknesses over to the side of positive evils. It is by no means conclusive against a woman's good qualities of heart that she is not able to conceal her consciousness of wearing diamonds. We may smile at her weakness; but true charity admonishes us to hold in suspended judgment all beyond what actual observation has not verified."

I acknowledged the reproof, and stood corrected. Since then I have been inclined to notice diamond wearers with a closer observation than before.

The result of this observation does not give a very different report from that made on the evening above referred to, viz., that few persons know how to wear diamonds with the proper grace.

J. O. A.

A LIBERAL Lord Mayor in pocket and principle is the elected Hebrew Lord Mayor of London, who gave his Christian chaplain a fifty-guinea present for preaching his first sermon before him at St. Lawrence's Church.

NEW SCALE OF COSTS IN EQUITY.—The new scale of costs and charges to be paid to counsel and attorneys in the county courts, under the Equitable Jurisdiction Act came into operation on October 2. There are two scales of costs set forth—the lower scale as to matters not exceeding £100, and the higher scale above £100. All the county courts will possess the powers of the Court of Chancery in suits and

matters not exceeding £500. On the lower scale, "instructions to sue or defend," a sum of 10s. will be allowed, and on the higher scale 15s. To an attorney attending court and conducting a cause where no counsel is employed, the fee on the lower scale is £1 10s., and on the higher two guineas; and where counsel is engaged, the sum to be allowed is £2 on the lower, and £3 on the higher scale. There are "occasional costs" and other costs to be allowed on taxation. The Lord Chancellor has sanctioned the scale, and directed it, as well as the new rules, to take effect as above stated.

A WINTER IN ITALY.

By H. B. S.

(Continued from No. 120.)

PICTURES AND PICTURE GALLERIES IN VENICE.

THAT Venice should be, *par excellence*, a city of splendid painting, was a thing to be of course expected.

To be sure, we may say it was founded by fishermen—but fishermen by necessity, and not by birth.

Outcast remains of families from the proud old Roman cities, they had in their breasts the seeds not only of aristocratic pomp and pride, but the memory of luxury and elegance, the tradition of art, and a transmitted impulse towards the beautiful derived from an art-loving parentage.

No sooner, therefore, did labour bring wealth, than everything took a splendid form and colouring, and painting blossomed out in hues more gorgeous than the world has seen elsewhere.

That intense physical relish for colour which may almost be called an appetite in warm-blooded races, found here its full gratification.

The peculiar luminous atmosphere of reflection with which the intersecting sea fills every street and lane of Venice, clothes even common objects in picturesque tints. The nature they copied was a nature suffused and saturated with light; they saw the commonest objects through a warm, glowing medium.

So, when one enters the halls of the Belle Arti, what comes over one most powerfully is a sense of light—a glory of colour in every picture.

There are pictures there that seem as if they would almost light a room, they bear in themselves such a radiance.

No matter whether the objects represented be in themselves of bright or of sombre colours, they seem to reveal themselves through a warm, glowing medium, which lies between them and the eye, and which glorifies them, just as the ripples of rich amber-coloured water give to the pebbles at the bottom of a brook mellow tints, which disappear when you draw them out.

All of us have seen our common apartments at times lit up by sunset or morning rays, when the whole room seemed to be full of a kind of glory, and the old clock, the arm-chair, the table, the book-shelves, looked wrapped in a dreamy and mysterious brightness.

Such light is all the while in Venice, and her painters grew up in it, and faithfully copying nature, reproduced on canvas what existed in reality around them. Then, too, here are historical paintings, where you have splendid draperies, scarlet, black, orange, purple, and all regal colours, falling in majestic and massive folds, in fashions that suggest royal fulness and profusion.

Here are senators, warriors, doges, with ensigns and banners, and all the pomp and circumstance of a proud and showy national life.

Here Titian reigns supreme in his greatest religious picture, the Assumption of the Madonna. Generally speaking, the Venetian painting is sensuous, and not spiritual.

This picture is the only one of Titian's that we remember that seems to express a powerful religious impulse, and this is given with such pomp of colour, such a triumphant brilliancy, that the effect is rather of a religious intoxication than of pure aspiration.

But we are not of that school of thinkers who suppose the spiritual world differs from ours in being lower toned and poorer than ours in any conceivable element. We do not believe that watery blue, faded pink, and mild suffusions of stone-colour express spirituality, and so we find no fault that Titian represents his Madonna ascending with a pomp of hues like gold and purple clouds of a glorious sunset.

It is a beautiful idea, too, that the great type of maternity should be borne up by little children, whose bright ecstatic faces, peeping out of the cloud-wreath that surrounds her, are each one of them a lovely study for an artist. The clouds, too, are as real and fleecy as ever wreathed around Alpine heights or cradled the setting sun.

The only thing we could wish withdrawn from the picture is that representation so common, but always

too daring, of the Almighty Father. How can the head of any old man, however grand, express Him who is Eternal Youth and Strength?

When the Psalmist says he dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto, he gave a hint which it is much to be regretted has been so generally neglected in Italian art. Had the top of the picture seemed to be melting away into that light—had our imagination been merely stimulated by the ecstatic eyes of the Madonna to conceive a glory which was open to her but veiled from us, how much more profound might have been the impression!

It is true that a born and bred Puritan, who believes that no such event as the assumption of the Madonna ever existed, wants a background of sympathy for such a picture. But there is in it, apart from one's theology, a vivid human interest which may have its echo in any home from which a lovely saintly mother has gone upward.

The group of apostles below, who stand gazing with up-raised hands after her, have the expression of men who cannot wait for their turn to come, so do they long to go with her; it tells of a feeling that must often have possessed hearts who have seen the eternal doors open to take in a friend, and close again, leaving them with all their longings and yearnings still on the outside.

This picture is placed in a hall full of splendid paintings, which are all dimmed by its glories. Among others, there are the first and the last works of Titian: the one painted at the age of seventeen, and the other at ninety.

The first, viewed in the light of our present knowledge, gives many promises of what afterwards he accomplished.

The last is pale and cold in tone, as if done by a hand from which the vital warmth was departing; one may see that it was done by a master, just as in a pale and dying face we may trace the lineaments once splendid in manly strength.

Beside this hall is a wilderness of other ones—full of a splendid richness as satisfactory to the eye as our autumn days when green, scarlet, purple, orange shine through a haze of gold.

There is a noble Paul Veronese there—the pendant to the Marriage of Cana in the Louvre. It is called the Feast in the House of Levi, and in sumptuous majesty of arrangement quite equals the other, while it has this superior point, that it renders the Saviour with a dignified and majestic head; whereas in the picture in the Louvre, one's eye is displeased with the commonplace vulgarity of that divine figure.

Paul Veronese is the poet of upholstery and costume—the ideal of courtliness and regal state. He gives you finely grown, well developed men, clothed in velvet and jewellery, with courtly, high born ladies, in satins and laces. His architecture is palace-like and splendid; and when he would paint Christ and his apostles, he knows no better way than to surround them with the state he loves.

Like the wise men of old, he opens his treasury and presents gifts—gold, frankincense and myrrh—and worships with vestments and rich jewels and with courtly majesty.

Nevertheless, we have never seen anything in Paul Veronese that was low or vulgar; no disgraceful lending of his pencil to coarse, vulgar sensualism, as sometimes in Rubens. He is always the gentleman, and in religion gives the best he has, so one cannot but like him.

There is one painter whom we met for the first time in Venice, whose colouring has a peculiar light and warmth, and whose execution a peculiar finish—this is Paris Bordone—a contemporary of Titian's, and in his time almost as much esteemed.

The peculiarly Venetian gift of colour he certainly seemed equally to have possessed, though there is no evidence that he had other masterly qualities which Titian united.

The most striking picture of this artist represents one of the old legends of Venice.

A poor fisherman has been called out in a dreadful storm and requested to row three unknown persons a certain distance, who prove to be all saints, and one of them—St. Mark, the Patron of Venice—gives him a ring, which he bids him take to the Doge and Senate of Venice, with his command that they should reward him out of the public treasury.

The fisherman did accordingly, and the ring turns out to be the seal of St. Mark, which, being in the state treasury, could of course have been got out only by a miracle; and the fisherman received a pension for life.

The scene of the presentation of the ring to the assembled senators by the humble fisherman is the subject of a painting so full of brightness—so mellow, so warm, so finished—that one can never be tired of looking at it.

We could not but wish that this one picture could suddenly be set down in our own national gallery. Here, surrounded by so many others of the same class

of merit, it strikes the eye—but there, it would open a new era in one's idea of colouring to see so bright a stranger.

The architecture represented is not that of the ducal palace, but of the artist's own fancy—beautiful, but not as beautiful as he might have made it by copying the actual senate chamber.

One comes away from this gallery with a satisfied feeling. The harmonies of colour soothe one's nerves, as harmonies of sound soothe the ear.

One cannot but be interested in the present fate of a race of men who developed themselves in such magnificent forms.

Every picture in the Belle Arti is a plea for Venice—a protest against her enslavement under a coarse, uncongenial, unappreciative tyranny.

(To be continued.)

THE BONDS OF FRIENDSHIP.

"Tis sweet to walk together, to see the light
Of truth and hope reflected in each other's eyes;
Join hand to hand in friendship's sacred bonds,
So journey on until we reach the skies.

FRIENDSHIP, in the highest sense of the word, can only subsist between persons of strict integrity and true generosity.

Before we fancy ourselves possessed of such a treasure, we should each examine our own heart's value, and see how well it is qualified for so sacred a connection; and then, a harder task remains—to find out whether the object of our affection is also endowed with the same virtuous disposition. Youth and inexperience are ill able to penetrate into characters; and they immediately suppose they have found the object of their pursuit.

It is a melancholy consideration, though true, that the judgment can only be formed by experience, which generally comes too late for our own use, and is seldom accepted for that of others.

I have known some of the sweetest and most delightful connections between persons of different ages, in which the elder has received the highest gratification from the love and society of the younger, whilst the latter has gained the noblest advantages from the conversations and counsels of her wiser friend. Nor had the attachment been without use as well as pleasure to the elder party.

And it will be seen that there is no better way of improving one's attainments than by imparting them to others; and the desire of doing this in the most acceptable way will add a sweetness and gentleness to those whom we hold in the bonds of friendship, and teach them the arts of insinuating and instructing the mind, and of winning the hearts of those whom we profess to love.

These are observations which experience has enabled me to draw from real life, and not from what others have said or written, however great their authority. The first attachment of young hearts is friendship—when real, the noblest and happiest of affections.

J. A.

DOG-JUSTICE.—A man named Buhler, residing at Berne, was in the habit of training dogs to perform tricks, and sometimes cruelly ill-treated them. A few days since he brutally beat a little dog which would not obey his order, and while doing so one of his large dogs sprang forward, seized him by the throat, and bit him so severely that he died on the following day.

DISCOVERY IN WORLDSHAM CHURCH, BASINGSTOKE.—This church is in course of restoration, under the superintendence of Mr. D. Brandon. A curious discovery has been made in the floor of the church, of a stone monument, like a coffin, containing the figure of a lady, apparently an abbess of the fourteenth century, carved, with her hands crossed one over the other, and holding what appears to be a rosary, the ribbon of which passes round her neck. Her dress is fastened with a round brooch, which has a cross carved in the centre. The lower part of the coffin is closed, and a cross or crozier, 3 ft. long, is cut out upon it. The length of the white stone is 6 ft. 5 1/2 in.; the width at the head is 1 ft. 9 1/2 in., and at the feet 1 ft. 5 in.

GEMS.—Many chemists have endeavoured to produce artificial diamonds; hitherto with invariable success. Most of the other gems, however, have been produced artificially, the artificial stones having exactly the same composition and properties as the natural ones. Rubies have till now been the most difficult gems to produce artificially, but MM. Sta. Claire Deville, Caron, and Troost have just communicated to the Academy of Sciences a method by which they can be made with ease. A mixture of fluoride of aluminium with a small quantity of fluoride of chromium is placed in an earthen crucible which has first been carefully lined with calcined alumina, after the fashion in which

it is customary to line crucibles with charcoal. In the centre of this crucible, in the midst of the mixture of fluorides, is placed a small platinum crucible containing boracic acid. The outer crucible having been well covered, the whole is exposed to a temperature sufficiently high to volatilise both the boracic acid and the fluorides. The vapour of the boracic acid then decomposes that of the fluorides, with formation of fluoride of boron and deposition of crystals of the mixed oxides of aluminium and chromium. If the fluorides were originally mixed in the right proportions, these crystals will have exactly the same composition, and exactly the same colour, lustre, specific gravity, and other properties, as the most perfect natural rubies.

SCIENCE.

No change has been made in the form of the plough used in Sicily since the time of the Romans.

The temperature of the Lake of Geneva, at the depth of 1,000 feet, is always forty-two degrees.

WATER impregnated with iron is said to have stopped the cattle plague in Poland.

It has been stated that there is sufficient iron in the blood of forty-two men to make a plough-share weighing about 24 lb.

MR. ALLNATT has shown that the quantity of dew deposited in four nights during last month, in Sussex, averaged a ton and a half per acre.

A COLD of ninety-one degrees below zero has been produced by applying two parts of sulphuric acid to snow.

THE SOLAR heat in a year is sufficient to melt a coating of ice spread over the globe forty-six feet thick.

IRON castings may be hardened after finishing by immersing them, when brought to a cherry-red heat, in a solution composed of sulphuric and nitric acids and water.

DR. BENCE JONES states that sugar is produced in fluids of the animal body by extreme cold, owing to deficient oxydation of the carbonaceous articles of food.

A 32-lb. rocket sent up perpendicularly at Shooter's Hill is said to have risen 6,000 ft., and was seen at Deal. A 24-lb. rose 4,500 ft.; a 4-lb., 2,400 ft.; and a 1-lb., 1,500 ft. The object was to determine the longitude on Whiston's plan.

AT BATSHAM, a port of Tonquin, lat. 20 deg. 50 min. N., only one small ebb and flow of the tide in twenty-four hours has been observed. This phenomenon is due to the meeting of two tidal waves differing slightly in depth.

MR. HUGGINS states that from spectrum observations he has made, he is led to believe that the stars closely resemble the sun, and that the source of their light is probably solid matter in a highly incandescent state.

FROM ANALYSES of cow's milk, it has been discovered that the quantity of butter present in the evening milk is more than double that of the morning. The quantity of sugar of milk is greatest at mid-day, and decreases towards evening. The albumen, casein, &c., remain almost constant.

THE COURTS of Exchequer and Common Pleas are about to be ventilated by a new application of the steam jet. Fresh air is to be brought in at a high level above the courts, and the ventilated air withdrawn by a separate jet from each court. In winter they are to be warmed, and in summer cooled, by a peculiar application of this principle.

A MINISTERIAL order has been issued in France that only utensils tinned with pure tin should be used in the military hospitals, and M. Jeannel gives the following process for detecting small quantities of lead in tin. He treats five decigrammes of the metal filled off with an excess of nitric acid diluted with three times its weight of water, boils the mixture, filters, and then drops into the solution a crystal of iodide of potassium. If only one ten-thousandth of lead is present, a yellow precipitate is formed, which does not disappear on adding an excess of ammonia.

THE CHEMISTRY of wine is still occupying the attention of the most advanced French chemists. M. A. Béchamp, in a recent communication to the Academy of Sciences, defends his own views as to the cause of the maturing of wines. In his lectures on the vinous fermentation, he had stated that all the elements which wine contains—succinic, acetic, phosphoric, tartaric, cantharic, and other acids, glycerine, alcohol, ethers, extractive matters, &c.—act upon each other. From the slow action of the acids on the alcohols arise new ethers; and the alcohols, becoming more or less oxidized, form odorous

aldehydes. Later still, when in the bottles, these reactions in the wine continue, till at length it acquires all its value, and its bouquet is developed. M. Béchamp describes the experiments which induce him to maintain his opinion that wine is brought to maturity by means of a fermentation provoked by organisms which succeed to the alcoholic fermentation, properly so called. A wine (he says) may contain these organisms and yet not be spoilt; and however paradoxical it may appear, wine is ripened and improved by an influence analogous to one which may injure it. The production of these organisms ought then certainly to be favoured.

THE LATEST NOVELTY IN COMPANIES.—We find the following startling announcement:—With the view of doing for railway passengers throughout Britain what the cab law has done for them in the metropolis, by restricting the profits of cab proprietors and reducing the cost of conveyance to passengers, it is proposed to form a new line or lines of railway, with a central terminus in New Oxford Street, and branches to Dover, Holyhead, and Edinburgh; few stations, and fares at very low rates, such as 12s. first-class to Dover, and 8s. second-class; £1 for 400 miles first-class, and 15s. second-class; the profits of shareholders to be restricted to 5 per cent. per annum; the gauge to be 7 ft., instead of 4 ft. 8 in., so as to prevent junctions, and hence danger; the power of the directors to be limited; and the total cost of the line to be £30,000,000.

BIRMINGHAM JEWELLERY.

THE JEWELLERS' workmen receive the highest regular wages of any class except the machinists—i. e., the skilled artisan of the lathe; and some of those engaged in the manufacture of rifles during a busy season, as during the American war. Boys as apprentices earn from 5s. to 15s. a week, beginning at fourteen; and girls who make the gold chains, and by whom no other kinds of jewellers' and goldsmiths' work is done, earn the same, rising a trifle higher, some young women receiving as much as 18s. a week. It requires little acquaintance with Birmingham to see that young girls and women can get readily a very independent living; but let me add, for the instruction of the strong-minded lady benefactors of their sex, that, as far as I can observe, this is a condition of rather questionable results, morally speaking.

All Birmingham trade nearly, and especially the jewellers and small goldsmiths, is carried on by great numbers of mastermen—nine out of ten being originally workmen. Very little capital is needed: two or three pounds in his pocket, a little metal, and a shop, with its gas blowpipe and bench often let with it, and the workman can produce scarf-pins, studs, brooches, rings, and receive the money for them from the factors who supply the shopkeepers. There are about 600 mastermen in the trade, employing of jewellers proper, 3,000; silversmiths, 1,000; gold and silver chainmakers, 1,500; gilt ornament makers, 1,000; with about a thousand hands employed in making leather cases, who are chiefly women, and the toolmakers for this branch of trade, making altogether 7,500. If we allow three to each, as representing the family or persons deriving support from this trade, we have thus upwards of twenty thousand of the working classes subsisting by this consumption of ornaments for the person.

The value of the gold and silver used in Birmingham is stated at a million, and the precious stones at a quarter of a million more. Gold chains, which have only been made during the last thirty-five years, are now made to the amount of £550,000 in the year; there are forty-seven master chainmakers, some employing as many as 300 hands, but most of them not more than ten.

About 1,600 persons, nearly all women and young girls from thirteen to eighteen, are employed in making chains. These girls sit at the bench in rows, each with a gas jet and blowpipe before her, and here you see them placing the links of a chain one by one together with a pair of pliers, the made part of the chain hanging in the left hand. As the end of each new link is put through by the pliers the ends are closed, and then laying aside the tool, the girl puts a drop of borax and gold filings upon the joint, and taking her blowpipe in her mouth, cleverly darts the flame across it for a moment, and the joint is fixed. A dip into a basin of water to cool it, and again the process is repeated with another link.

In this patient way is every chain we see made, and it is wonderful to see what pretty twisted forms the links fall into. All forms of link are made by punching and piercing in screw presses, or by cutting small facets upon them after the chain is put together, by bringing the links against a revolving wheel of soft metal. Most of the links are first made out of the rough by winding the metal in a spiral upon a mandril, and then cutting them off separately. A strip of gold or silver, as it may be, having been previously drawn through a plate to give it any form

desired, as the half-rounds, or fluted, or flat, &c. Even those extremely ingenious chain bracelets, which are as pliant as a piece of velvet ribbon, are made link by link, and then flattened by being passed through rollers.

It is stated that the value of the precious metals used in Birmingham, in all trades, including gold and silver plate and electro-plating, is about one million.

GREAT AQUEDUCT.

THE CONVEYANCE of the waters of the river Dhuis to Paris ranks amongst the most important public works of its class, and being just completed, a short account of the undertaking will not be uninteresting. The object is the increase in the supply of the amount of water for the consumption of Paris, and especially that of the higher levels of the city.

The aqueduct of the Dhuis, or Dhuya, commences at Pargny, in the Aisne, and traverses the departments of the Seine-et-Marne, Seine-et-Oise, and Seine, its total length being about 135 kilometres, or upwards of eighty English miles. The whole is constructed in solid masonry, with a fall of about seven inches in the mile, with the exception of about nine or ten miles, where the waters are carried through valleys by means of cast iron siphon pipes, 55 in. in diameter, and having an average inclination of rather more than 13 in. to the mile.

The stone aqueduct lies underground throughout about six miles of its course, four of the principal tunnels being from eight hundred to upwards of two thousand yards in length. Four of the siphons are from a thousand to nearly five thousand yards long. The aqueduct was commenced in June, 1863, and completed in last September, and the total cost, including indemnities to proprietors of land, is said to have amounted to between £600,000 and £700,000.

On a recent occasion the waters of the Dhuis arrived at the entrance to the great reservoirs of Menilmontant, and in a few days, when the aqueduct and siphons are completely cleansed by allowing the water to pass directly through them into the sewers, the reservoirs will be filled and the service commenced.

The Dhuis Aqueduct is calculated to furnish about 40,000 cubic metres of water in twenty-four hours, and that of the Marne, with other supplies brought to Paris, about four times that quantity, or 200,000 cubic metres in all per day.

Some idea of the magnitude of these works may be formed from the fact that the stopcocks or valves which close the main supply pipes at their junction with the reservoir weigh more than four tons each. The pipes themselves are more than 39 in. in diameter, and the valve or stopcock consists of a disc of cast iron, which is set in the direction of the length of the pipe, or transversely, according as the water is to be turned on or off.

PREVENTION OF RAILWAY ACCIDENTS.—There is now on view in the Rue Impériale, at Lyons, a model of a railway made and designed entirely by a French workman named Rouchoue. The workmanship is of a highly-finished description, and the improvements said to be simple and ingenious. Many accidents are caused by the officials neglecting to turn the points; but in this case the driver has the power of turning the points himself, without dismounting from the engine. M. Rouchoue uses discs at various points, to indicate when the line is not clear, and the trains are made to protect themselves: thus, a train in passing moves a disc, which thus protects it till it has run a distance of 1,500 metres, when the same train restores the disc to its former position.

COAL AND OIL IN KANSAS.—Professor Swallow, State Geologist for Kansas, recently passed through Topeka on his way west on a professional tour. The *Record* says he goes to Salina, then to the headwaters of Arkansas, and back by the way of Council Grove. He has been at work in the eastern counties of the state, and reports good workable beds of coal, discovered at the surface, in Doniphan, Atchison, Brown, Jefferson, Miami, Linn, Bourbon, Cherokee, Osage, Jackson, Shawnee, and Leavenworth counties. Indications of oil-springs appear in Miami, Bourbon, Lyon, Cherokee, Douglass, and Shawnee counties. All the eastern part of the state is underlaid with good beds of coal, within such depths as will pay to work, and in some places not mentioned, the beds will come to the surface. The sandstone which produces the oil-springs of Miami, Linn, and Bourbon counties underlie some portions of each of the counties in the eastern part of the state.

A GERMAN named Bonn has discovered a means of making air additionally useful to the world. The humus, or upper mould, is well known to be the cream of the earth, and the product of the atmosphere acting on animal and vegetable matter for centuries. Deep ploughing, however, being expensive, is not much resorted to, hence the really valuable soil is but in proportion to the earth as cream is to milk. It is

proposed to introduce air into the earth by means of pipes, with narrow apertures, laid from 3 ft. to 6 ft. deep, all leading to one huge hearth, upon which a fire will constantly burn, and consequently draw the atmosphere through the pipes, dispersing oxygen about the roots of everything growing above. To make the idea complete, we would suggest that a fire be kindled at each end of the pipes, so that in cold, wet seasons the air may be turned on hot and dry, to take the place of sunshine. Of course, the pipes must taper, or both fires would pull alike. Perhaps underground watering may yet be performed by the same means.

FACETIE.

WHY is the heart of a lover like the sea serpent? Because it is a secret (sea creature) of great sighs (size).

A MAN got over a fence and stole a melon; while doing it he lost his pocket-book, containing £5. The owner of the melon found the treasure, and offers to restore it if he is paid for the melon, which he values at ten shillings.

SINGULAR IGNORANCE.—During a recent trial, there was a large number of ladies present, who caused a gentle murmur all the while. The usher mildly said repeatedly, "Silence!" when the judge mildly said, "Mr. Usher, don't you know better than to call silence when ladies are in court?"

AN old miser kept a tame jackdaw, that used to steal pieces of money and hide them in a hole, which the cat observing, asked why he would hoard up those round shining things, that he could make no use of? "Why," said the jackdaw, "my master has a whole chest full, and makes no more use of them than I."

NEAT.—Bassompierre, the French Ambassador to Spain, was telling Henri Quatre how he entered Madrid. "I was mounted on the smallest mule in the world!"—"Ah," said Henri, "what an amusing sight—the biggest donkey, on the smallest mule!"—"I was your majesty's representative," was the rejoinder.

ADMIRAL FARRAGUT tells a good story of a boy who, in a great storm at sea, when the ship's crew were all at prayers, burst into a fit of laughter. Being reproved for his ill-timed mirth, and asked the reason of it, "Why," said he, "I was laughing to think what a hissing the boatswain's red nose will make when it comes into the water." This ludicrous remark set the crew a-laughing, inspired them with new spirits, and by great exertions they brought the vessel safe into port.

A DUEL WITH SODA-WATER BOTTLES.—A singular duel at John o'Groats. Two persons, who had been often quarrelling, met at a Pulteney-town publichouse, and agreed to fight across the table, not with pistols, but, at the suggestion of "mine host," with soda-water bottles. A dozen baskets having been supplied to each, the fight began in downright earnest, each firing away his corks as fast as he could make them "pop," and by the time each had stood a dozen rounds from his opponent they were tired enough, and the ludicrousness of the operations having changed their wrath to laughter loud and long, they shook hands and departed, not foes, but friends.

THE word "Thanks" seems to strike our foreign friends as the most powerful in the English language, and the most nondescript, and the end is, that they cannot make out when to use it, replying, equally, "Thanks" to the application of the boot that sends them downstairs, or the sovereign that comforts. The foreigner complains that every other word is "Thanks." When the steamer lands him and he is overwhelmed with pressing invitations, from the Sailor's Retreat up to the Occidental, the only reply he can make is, "Thanks." If you tell him his next step will precipitate him through a man-trap into the city's cloaca, he must say, "Thanks." If you ask him to dinner, he must accept or refuse with the same word.

A CANNY SCOT.—In Lanarkshire there lived a sma' sma' laird, named Hamilton, who was noted for his eccentricity. On one occasion a neighbour waited on him, and requested his name as an accommodation to a bill for twenty pounds at three months' date, which led to the following characteristic and truly Scottish colloquy:—"Na, na, I canna do that?" "Why for no, laird; ye ha'e done the same thing for others?" "Ay, ay, Tammas, but there's wheels within wheels ye ken naething about; I canna do it." "It's a sma' affair to refuse me, laird." "Weel, ye see, Tammas if I was to pit my name till ye wad get the siller fr'm the bank, and when the time came round ye wadna be ready, and I wad ha'e to pay't; sae we may just as weel quarrel the noo, as long as the siller's in ma pouch." On one occasion Hamilton having business w' th the Duke of

Hamilton at Hamilton Place, the duke politely asked him to lunch. A liveried servant waited upon them, and was most assiduous in his attentions to the duke and his guest. At last our eccentric friend lost patience, and looking at the servant, addressed him thus:—"What the deil for are ye dance, dancing about the room that gait; can ye no draw in yer chair and sit down? I'm sure there's plenty on the table for three."

EYE WATER.

A correspondent informs us that the following colloquy actually took place a few evenings since between a visitor at one of our hotels and a waiter connected with the establishment.

Visitor: "Can you tell me, waiter, what time it is high water in Bristol?"

Waiter (musingly): "Yes, sir, beg pardon, sir, what was it you pleased to say, sir?"

Visitor (speaking slowly and distinctly): "I wanted to know if you could tell me about high water here, what time?"

Waiter (brightening up and speaking with authority): "Oh, yes, sir; you can get it at any chemist's shop, sir!"

[Visitor is dumb with amazement; waiter removes dishes, evidently satisfied that he has done and said the correct thing.]

DANIEL WEBSTER once affirmed in company that no woman ever wrote a letter without a postscript. "My next letter shall refute you!" said a lady of his acquaintance. The "Great Expounder" soon after received a letter from his fair disputant, where after her signature stood: "P.S.—Who is right now, you or I?"

MARRIAGE EXTRA-ORDINARY.—Between a Dumb-waiter and a Still-room Maid.—Punch.

CRITICISM AS UNDERSTOOD BY ALL BUT CRITICS.—True criticism, when it praises, is only a correct appreciation of the meaning of the author; but the moment it begins to find fault it degenerates from its high functions, and sinks into vulgar abuse.—Punch.

AN OMISSION.—In the usual October introductory addresses to medical students no mention was made of the circumstance when doctors, like all other men, undergo midnight harangues from their wives, they are not called curtain, but clinical, lectures.—Punch.

AN INJURY THAT IS NOT TO BE ADMITTED AT ANY PRICE.—The authorities of Hamburg have prohibited the importation into their port of "all skins and hides coming from England." This may sound like ingratitude on their part after the free way in which we have recently imported their Hamburg sherry; but no one would question the wisdom of the step, as those cunning poisoners know well enough that any skin, or hide, that once had undergone a soaking in the above deleterious mixture, would be so thoroughly worthless as to fall in value below the consideration even of a Tanner.—Punch.

DREADFUL MISBEHAVIOUR.

Lady: "I wish, Paulina, you'd teach your sister how to address her mistress."

Paulina: "Lor, mam, she'll never 'ave no manners; why, she don't even call me miss!"—Punch.

THE LAST THING IN LUCIFER MATCHES.—There is an ingenious safety match, now in general use, which will light only on the box, and not always on that. We hear that it is to be superseded by a new invention which will not light at all. The latter is especially intended for the use of nurseries, powder magazines, and asylums.—Punch.

COOL, BATHER.

1st Swell: Why, what on earth, Fred, could have induced you to be out a day like this in that dress, without an umbrella?"

2nd Swell: "You see, fact is it's such a dosid long time since we've had any wain, that it's quite a new sensation, and I'm enjoying it!"—Punch.

THE eldest daughter of the King of Bonny arrived in Liverpool from Bonny, in the Royal Mail steamer Calabar. The object of the able lady's visit to Liverpool is to undergo a course of English and French education previous to her return to her father's dominions in Africa. The young lady, notwithstanding her colour, has very agreeable, and for a native of the West Coast of Africa, pleasing features.

It is known that the eminent French surgeon, M. Nellaton, received 400,000 francs for his professional visit to the late Czarowitch. It is not so well known, we believe, that this fee was asked, not, as has been stated, because the famous surgeon was too rich and too old to make the journey, and that he, therefore, set a prohibitory tariff, but because M. Nellaton avoids all utterly hopeless cases, as this was known to be, and thus does not endanger his just reputation for

saving his patients—where there is a glimmer of hope! The fee demanded by the French surgeon whom Queen Amelia recommended to King Leopold, without successful result, accounted, it is now said, to 150,000 francs. The English surgeon who operated successfully on the royal patient (Mr. Henry Thompson) left the honorarium to his majesty's good will and pleasure, and received £5,000 and an order of Belgian chivalry.

LONG LIFE.

It is in the youth that the seeds of premature dissolution are generally sown; and we are not yet in a disposition to say at how late an age death may in fact be premature.

Hufeland, who has well studied the subject, believes that the organisation and vital powers of man are able to support a duration and activity of 200 years, and thus to reach, within five years, the age of Terah, Abraham's father. Of course, this is but an individual record, yet it is one which ought not to be treated with contempt.

If the moral progress of society were to keep pace with its scientific and social development, there cannot be the smallest doubt that in two or three generations the number of persons rejoicing in a patriarchal age would be greatly increased. Some pledge of this seems to be afforded us in the fact that every epoch and every climate, however corrupt society may have become, has had its centenarians.

It would always be interesting and useful to remind young persons of the most remarkable examples of longevity, and to assure them at the same time that instances of persons living to a very great age are much more frequent than is generally supposed.

Hippocrates is said to have been 104 years old at the time of his decease, Democritus 109, and Galen 140. These were Grecians of Asia Minor.

In Italy, we have Marcus Aponius and Titus Fulvius, each living to 150; and Lord Bacon says that when a general taxation was made by Vespasian throughout the empire, there were found living between the Appenines and the Po no fewer than 124 persons aged 100 and upwards. In Ethiopia, Mark Albus reached his 150th year, and Saadi, the poet of Shiraz, lived to 102. Norway, in the last century, had its Drakenberg, aged 126; Tucomae its Louisa Traxo, a negress, aged 175; Mount Jura its Jacobs, 125 years old; and France its Bone and Goldsmith, aged respectively 121 and 140. Venice, at an earlier period, boasted of Luigi Cornaro, the model of temperance, whose treatise on sobriety is well known. He wrote it at the age of 80, and lived 20 years after.

In an old book, "On the Origin and Strata of the Earth," by Mr. Whiteside, there is a list of 32 persons, who died between 1635 and 1781, all of whom had lived above a century, and most of them considerably longer.

The following passage is extracted from Sir John Sinclair's "Statistical Account":—"Within these 20 years at least 12 persons have died in the lower parts of Galloway from 100 to 115 years old. William Marshall, a tinker in this place, is now 118. He might pass for 60. His faculties are unimpaired, and he walks through the country with ease."

As regards walking in old age, who has not heard of that Countess of Desmond, who at her bridal danced with Richard, Duke of Gloucester, afterwards the too famous Richard III., but then, as she described him, a straight and well-formed young man? In her old age, English settlers took possession of her estates, and she was reduced to great poverty. Yet this noble old dame, when in her 139th year, used to go on foot to the market town of Youghal every week, and even undertook a far longer and more perilous journey. Having begged a passage in a sailing vessel to Bristol, she trudged on foot, by the side of an aged and infirm daughter, from that city to London, to ask for redress at the hands of her sovereign. It was granted, and as she had come from Ireland to the capital, so she returned.

Lady Desmond was not the only aged countess in Ireland who attained her 140th year. Lady Eccleston, her contemporary, is said to have exceeded it by three years.

Most of us, again, are familiar with Thomas Parr, who worked as a labourer in Shropshire till he was 130, and took a journey to London at the age of 152; and Henry Jenkins, who died in 1670, and used to tell how, when a boy, he had taken a horse-load of arrows from his native place to Northallerton, for the use of the Earl of Surry at the battle of Flodden Field, which was fought in 1513. The writer has met in the streets of Florence, and conversed with, an inhabitant aged 104, whose teeth were white, whose body was straight, her step firm, and her intellect unimpaired.

It would be difficult in the history of a number of different persons remarkable for longevity to dis-

cover any circumstance common to them all, except perhaps that of being born of healthy parents, and of being inured to daily labour, temperance, and simple diet. The poor sexton of Peterborough, who lived long enough to bury two crowned heads, and to survive two complete generations, multiplied his years among the dust and bones of death. Agnes Milbourne, after bringing forth a numerous offspring, was obliged, through extreme indigence, to spend the latter part of her life in St. Luke's Workhouse, yet reached her 106th year in that sordid and unfriendly situation.

It will probably be found, as time goes on, science advances, and further research is made into the subject, that the secret of prolonging life consists in the judicious alternation of exercise in the open air, with study and manual toil. A ride to cover will exhilarate you, no doubt; but sawing an elm or sculling a boat will strengthen you more.

When Newton's mind was weary with its sublime labour, and demanded repose, he stretched and jaded it still further by poring over the Book of Revelations. This was a mistake. He might have lived over eighty-five if he had done as Archbishop Whately used to do in our day. He might often be seen at Redesdale in his shirt sleeves felling a tree in the park, with a heavy shower of sleet drifting on his wrinkled face; and though incessant worry killed him at last, his profuse dark hair refused to silver at sixty-two.

The means, therefore, which advancing civilization will recommend for the attainment of long life are all unlike the "vegetable sulphur" of Paracelsus, Cagliostro's "elixir of long life," or any other nostrum; and no one, we think, will deny that the wish for longevity is a noble one.

To desire that we may long be able to watch over the lives most dear to us—to bridge over a broad chasm between the present and the past—to be numbered among the senators of experience and the veterans of honest toil—to mark the progress of society and the fruit-bearing of stems we helped to plant—to wind calmly along the vale of years, and at length, with our mission accomplished and our earthly robe slowly worn, to fall from among men, leaving some legacy of thought or good example—is surely akin to those higher aspirations which stretch far away into the light of eternity, "along the line of limitless desire."

GEMS.

The light of friendship is like the light of phosphorus—seen plainest when all around is dark.

BELIEVE one half the ill one woman speaks of another, but credit twice the good she reports of her.

A YEAR of pleasure passes like a floating breeze, but a moment of misfortune seems an age of pain.

MOST of us spend so much time learning the opinions of others that we have no leisure to form any of our own.

MANY a rich man, in bringing up his son, seems ambitious of making what Aaron made—a golden calf.

THOSE we call odd people are very often merely such as disclose freely what the rest of us carefully conceal.

IF you would have your company at ease, be yourself at ease. Be at home within yourself, and all around you will feel so.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

WHAT MAKES A BUSHEL.—The following table of the number of pounds of various articles to a bushel may be of interest to our readers:—Wheat, 60 lbs.; corn, shelled, 55 lbs.; corn, on the cob, 70 lbs.; rye, 56 lbs.; oats, 50 lbs.; barley, 46 lbs.; buck wheat, 55 lbs.; Irish potatoes, 60 lbs.; sweet potatoes, 50 lbs.; onions, 57 lbs.; beans, 60 lbs.; bran, 20 lbs.; clover seed, 60 lbs.; timothy seed, 45 lbs.; hemp seed, 45 lbs.; blue-grass seed, 14 lbs.

RECIPE FOR MAKING CREAM CHEESE.—The way cream cheese is made in Ireland is this:—Take a quart of thick sour cream, in which mix one teaspoonful of salt; tie it up tightly in a coarse napkin, and hang to let the whey drip off; open the next day, and scrape down the cream together; tie tight again, and hang it up as before. When the whey ceases to drip, put the napkin and cream between two dinner plates, on top of which place a heavy weight. Leave the cream under the plate for a day and a night, after which the cheese will be fit for use.

MANY sea-monsters have lately been seen at the entrance of the Channel, their presence accounting for the almost total disappearance of pilchards and mackerel from that part of the coast. In the neighbour-

hood of Quessant (Finistere), there were seen five sharks, also several whales, dolphins, and porpoises. One of the sharks was caught by a line thrown from the Eurydice, but the monster broke away and escaped.

THE FOUR MISFORTUNES.

A HEBREW TALE.

A RIOUS Rabbi, forced by heathen hate
To quit the boundaries of his native land,
Wandered abroad, submissive to his fate,
Through pathless woods and wastes of burning sand.

A patient ass, to bear him in his flight,
A dog, to guard him from the robber's stealth,
A lamp, by which to read the law at night—
Was all the pilgrim's store of worldly wealth.

At set of sun he reached a little town,
And asked for shelter and a crumb of food;
But every face repelled him with a frown,
And so he sought a lodgin in the wood.

"Tis very hard," the weary traveller said,
"And most inhospitable, I protest,
To send me fasting to this forest bed;
But God is good, and means it for the best!"

He lit his lamp to read the sacred law,
Before he spread his mantle for the night;
But the wind rising with a sudden daw,
He read no more—the gust put out his light.

"Tis strange," he said, "tis very strange, indeed,
That ere I lay me down to take my rest,
A chapter of the law I may not read—
But God is good, and all is for the best."

With these consoling words the Rabbi tries
To sleep—his head reposing on a log—
But, ere he fairly shut his drowsy eyes,
A wolf came up and killed his faithful dog.

"What new calamity is this?" he cried;
"My honest dog—a friend who stood the test
When others failed—lies murdered at my side!
Well, God is good, and means it for the best!"

Scarce had the Rabbi spoken, when, alas!
As if at once to crown his wretched lot,
A hungry lion pounced upon the ass,
And killed the faithful donkey on the spot.

"Alas! alas!" the weeping Rabbi said,
"Misfortune haunts me like a hateful guest;
My dog is gone, and now my ass is dead—
Well, God is good, and all is for the best!"

At dawn of day, imploring heavenly grace,
Once more he sought the town; but all in vain;
A band of robbers had despoiled the place,
And all the churlish citizens were slain!

"Now, God be praised!" the grateful Rabbi cried.
"If I had tarried in the town to rest,
I, too, with these poor villagers had died—
Sure, God is good, and all is for the best!"

"Had not the saucy wind put out my lamp,
By which the sacred law I would have read,
The light had shown the robbers to my camp,
And here the villains would have left me dead!"

"Had not my faithful animals been slain,
Their noise, no doubt, had drawn the villains
near,

And so their master, it is very plain,
Instead of them, had fallen murdered here!"

"Full well I see that this hath happened so
To put my faith and patience to the test;
Thanks to His name! for now I surely know
That God is good, and all is for the best!"

VINTAGE IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF PARIS.—The vintage began in some parts of France as early as the middle of August, and nearly everywhere in the first week in October. It is not perhaps generally known that from seventy to eighty thousand casks of wine are produced annually in the district to the north of Paris, and of which Argenteuil is the centre. There are about fifteen hundred vine-growers in the locality in question. The vintage commenced on the 7th September, about nine thousand persons being engaged to aid in the gathering. The opening of the vintage is officially announced, and labourers, male and female, come from all parts to the little town of Argenteuil, where they camp in the streets for the night, roasting potatoes for their supper by bonfires, and singing and dancing till three in the morning, when the vine-growers appear, engage as many hands as they require, and march off home, each at the head of their squad. The scene is one of the most extraordinary that can be witnessed, when the narrow streets of Argenteuil are filled with ten thousand men, women, and youths, all determined to enjoy their annual *foire*. The great abundance of

grapes, and the heat of the weather made the scene this year more noisy and more exciting than usual. It is calculated that the yield will reach nearly a hundred thousand pieces, or about six millions of gallons. In old times, when the crop was good, a cask was often filled for fifteen or twenty francs, say about three francs per gallon, but in 1855 the price had risen to considerably over a hundred francs. A hundred years ago the wine of Argenteuil was considered equal, if not superior, to Burgundy or Champagne; if that appreciation was a just one, the metropolitan grapes must have sadly deteriorated, or the products of the latter provinces greatly improved, unless, indeed, a great change has come over men's palates, for certainly at the present moment no one will drink the wine of Argenteuil if he can obtain any other

STATISTICS.

IN the mines of England there were 998 deaths by accident in the year 1864, and in the previous year 933.

THE population of Hong Kong, according to the last census, is 121,495; 79,579 Chinese live in 4,700 houses, or in the proportion of 16 individuals to one house.

POPULATION OF THE WORLD.—The population of the world is estimated at the present time to amount to 1,000,000,000 of persons, speaking 3,064 languages, and professing 1,100 forms of religion. The average duration of human life is estimated at 33 years and 6 months. A quarter of the children born, die before their 7th year, and one-half before their 17th. Out of the 1,000,000,000 persons living, 33,000,000 die each year, 91,000 each day, 3,750 each hour, 60 each minute, and consequently one every second. These 33,000,000 deaths are counterbalanced by 41,500,000 births—the excess being the annual increase of the human race. It has been remarked that births and deaths are more frequent in the night than during the day. Calculating one marriage for every 120 persons of both sexes and of all ages, 83,000,000 are celebrated annually.

NEGRO POPULATION IN THE SOUTHERN STATES.—Taking the census of 1860 as a basis, it will be found that in 12 of the slave states, embracing 826 counties, there is in 244 of them an excess of negro population. Alabama contains 52 counties in 20 of which there is an excess of negro population. Arkansas has 55 counties, with an excess of negro population in 6. Florida has 21 counties, with an excess of negro population in 6. Georgia has 132 counties, with an excess of negro population in 43. Louisiana has 48 counties, with an excess of negro population in 33. Maryland has 22 counties, with an excess of negro population in 5. Mississippi has 60 counties, with an excess of negro population in 31. North Carolina has 87 counties, with an excess of negro population in 20. South Carolina has 35 counties, with an excess of negro population in 20. Tennessee has 75 counties, with an excess of negro population in 3. Texas has 151 counties, with an excess of negro population in 3. Virginia has 148 counties, with an excess of negro population in 44. This would give the negroes a majority in the States of Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina.

MISCELLANEOUS.

IT is stated that the present mail service with India is carried on at a loss of £100,000 per annum.

It has been estimated that every horse employed in farming consumes one-sixth of what he cultivates.

CHANCELLOR, an English captain, in 1558, first sailed into the White Sea, and this led to the building of Archangel and the commerce of Russia.

THE first regiment armed with muskets was formed by Colonel Thomas, in the Low Countries, in the reign of Elizabeth.

IT has been ascertained that four a half rabbits consume in six weeks within a fraction as much as one sheep.

THERE is a report that it is possible the King and Queen of Portugal may, perhaps, visit England ere long.

A COD-FISH, weighing a stone and a half, having in its stomach a pair of spectacles, with brass frames, was caught about three miles off Flamborough Head, by Wm. Warcup, fisherman, of that place.

IRELAND AND ITS RAILWAYS.—The total amount of capital invested in Irish railways to the present time is only about £25,000,000 against about £337,000,000 invested in England, and £46,500,000 in Scotland. It is a remarkable fact that the whole railway traffic receipts of Ireland are less than those of the Great Eastern Railway, which runs through a purely agricultural district.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A. E. R.—The colour of the hair is dark brown.
A. V.—The notice is one for insertion in the *Times*, or any other daily newspaper.

W. P.—Five hundred inches of gold wire have been drawn from a grain.

C. R.—We beg to decline the effusion entitled "Woman's Worth."

S. W.—The hundred-thousandth part of a grain of gold may be seen with the naked eye.

WALTER M.—We have not at present the means of complying with your request, which will not be overlooked.

YORK.—The first pendulum clock was made in 1641, for St. Paul's, Covent Garden.

MEDICINE.—We think you are paying too much for the magnesium wire.

M. J. H.—We must refer you to the notice at foot of this page respecting literary contributions.

WALTER.—The Pacific Ocean covers seventy-eight millions of square miles; the Atlantic twenty-five millions.

G. D. S.—The inquiry respecting the list of books has not been stated with sufficient clearness, no special "imperial library" being specified.

ROUXER.—If windmill sails are inclined to the wind from sixty deg. to eighty deg., the effect is six-sevenths the force of the wind.

R. W. B. is desirous of corresponding matrimonially with a lady, who must be intelligent, pretty, and of a kind disposition. *Cartes de visite* to be exchanged.

C. A.—Fraunhofer, in his optical experiments, made a machine by which he could draw 32,900 lines in an inch breadth.

EDWARD G. P.—The lines are very creditable as poetical exercises; but not being quite suitable to our columns, are declined with thanks.

C. ADA.—It has been calculated that the number of cows in London is only sufficient to yield a tablespoonful of milk to each person daily.

F. E. R.—It is competent to any person to make a will; but where there is a question of bequeathing property, it is always desirable to obtain the services of a legal adviser.

E. N.—The highest inhabited place on the globe is the Post-house of Anconmarco, in Peru, which is nearly 16,000 ft. above the sea.

J. INMAN.—We know nothing whatever as regards the *bona fide* character, or otherwise, of the assurance company in question.

W. K.—As many as 50,000 seeds have been collected from a single red poppy plant, and 3,000 seeds have been ripened in one poppy head.

PEPPITA LA SPANIOLA.—We fear we cannot reply affirmatively to your request, excepting so far as giving an opinion on the point submitted.

CLARA, who is seventeen years of age, has blue eyes, and auburn hair, is tall and pretty, accustomed to housekeeping, and possesses an income, would like to correspond matrimonially with a gentleman about twenty years of age.

THOMAS R. R.—We are quite sure you can obtain in Glasgow the description of map you require, without incurring postage from London; for any educational bookseller there will be able to supply you with an atlas.

N. E. is desirous of corresponding with a young lady, with a view to matrimony. Is twenty-two years of age, of medium height, good-looking, of a kind disposition, and has an income of £200 per annum, with good prospects.

G. M.—A weight which would only be three ounces on the moon would be one pound on the earth, and the same force would throw a body six and a half times farther or higher on the former body.

HENRY THOMAS.—There is no Government examination for appointments in railway clearing houses; for which the educational requirements are merely elementary. (The handwriting needs much improvement.)

J. G. N. would be happy to correspond with a young lady about eighteen years of age, dark, fond of music, and well domesticated. Is 5 ft. 10 in. in height, twenty-one years of age, tolerably good looking, and pledges himself to make a kind and affectionate husband.

JUANITA, who is twenty-four years of age, a brunette, well-educated, and of an ardent and affectionate disposition, wishes to correspond with a well-educated gentleman, a few years her senior, who is of domesticated habits and kind disposition.

ADA and NELLY, the former twenty-two years of age, the latter twenty, wish to correspond and exchange *cartes* with two gentlemen, with a view to matrimony. "Ada" is petite, with dark hair and eyes. "Nelly" is of medium height, with light brown hair and blue eyes.

MARIA E.—The case you state is a very sad one, but a very common one. Inebriety has made desolate more hearts and homes than yours, and is the way that throws a fatal blight upon our social life. Still, although it is a

wife's duty to obey her husband and be with him, it would be well to obtain from yours sure proof that he is reformed before following him to America. If his reformation is genuine, he will not hesitate to supply that proof; if it be not, you would incur the same (if not greater) unhappiness as that from which you had previously sought to escape. (The handwriting is good.)

M. T. R., who is twenty-three years of age, rather dark, good looking, is good tempered and affectionate, has an income of £250 a year, is very respectably connected, and has good prospects, is desirous of corresponding with a young lady with a view to a matrimonial engagement.

LILY MAY wishes to correspond with a tall, dark gentleman, with a view to matrimony. Is nineteen years of age, with dark blue eyes, golden curly, very fair complexion, thoroughly domesticated, and of a loving and gentle disposition. The gentleman must belong to a profession.

GEORGE H. is anxious to correspond with a young lady with a view to marriage. Is twenty years of age, rather dark complexion, with dark eyes and rather dark auburn hair, possesses an income of £200 per annum, and has good expectations.

EMMA desires to form a matrimonial engagement with a gentleman from twenty to twenty-five years of age. Is twenty-one years of age, has blue eyes, and is considered a good-looking blonde; is accustomed to housekeeping, and has a good business.

SONNET.

What is alone beneath the sunny sky,

Heaven's broad azure banner, wide unfurled

In beaming beauty o'er our teeming world?

At night is people'd with the moon and stars;

The fair things form a sisterhood of light;

Alone they do not watch the solemn night;

Where shadows break the sunbeam's quivering bars

In far lone forest windings, green and dim,

The blue-eyed violet nests side by side;

And there the stock-dove woos his timid bride,

Ah! not for these glad things a lonely fate;

The weary human heart alone is desolate!

ANNA G.

H. TREMBERE.—THE LONDON READER can be forwarded by post to France subject to an English postage rate of one penny. It is published in weekly numbers, price one penny, in monthly parts, price 6d, and in half-yearly volumes, price 4s. 6d.

H. M.—At least two or three weeks must necessarily elapse between the receipt of an editorial communication, and the publication of the number of THE LONDON READER which contains the reply. Yours has been already answered; and we have not in the matter referred to been empowered to comply with your renewed request.

WILLIAM ELLIS.—THE LONDON READER incorporated THE 7 DAYS' JOURNAL, and commenced after No. 36 of the latter periodical. THE LONDON READER is bound in half-yearly volumes, price 4s. 6d. each. It can be forwarded in monthly parts by post, if stamps to defray cost (6d.) and postage (2d.) be remitted to the publisher.

A. C. E.—There is no difficulty in getting a lad of fourteen, who is active and a good scholar, into the merchant service. Shipowners constantly advertise in the daily papers for such; and at the shipping office for seamen at any port you will readily hear of a captain willing to accept boys of that description.

EDWARD J. R., having in business accumulated a considerable competence, is anxious to be introduced to a lady willing to correspond with him, exchange *cartes*, meet, and marry. Is 5 ft. 8 in. in height, with slight, well-made figure, and light complexion; is exceedingly even tempered, and kind in disposition.

EDWARD J. R., who is rather fair, with long, naturally curling hair and dark blue eyes, is very affectionate in disposition and fond of home, would be most happy to correspond and exchange *cartes* with a gentleman about twenty-eight years of age, rather tall, with large grey eyes and fair complexion, and who must be of good family.

CONSTANTINE.—We dare say the autograph letters from the nobleman named would possess some value to a collector of autographs; and could probably be disposed of, if you considered that to be a more proper course than returning them to the family of the respective writers. There is in Fleet Street an establishment where your object could doubtless be attained.

EMILY, who is twenty years of age, of medium height, has dark brown hair, soft grey eyes and fair complexion, is domesticated, lady-like, and belongs to a highly respectable family, would like to correspond matrimonially with a young gentleman about twenty-three years of age, of business habits. (If fair preferred, but a dark gentleman not objected to.)

C. R. HOPE.—Money is doubtless a very powerful sort of "sesame"; but we confess we know of no instance in which an introduction into the society of the *haute noblesse* was ever obtained by its means; nor do we believe such an introduction can be bought and paid for. A lady, however, who has 200 a year, the command of 4,000, is the niece of a colonel, moves in the best society, and is very musical, can certainly be in no difficulty as regards making acquaintances in a circle not far outside that of the nobility.

XENOPHON is very desirous of surrendering his state of single blessedness. Is thirty-one years of age, of a genial, frank disposition, very fond of home, music, chess, and a very refined and intellectual; and considered to be a fine handsome fellow; is at present in a wholesale house in the city, with an income of about 1500. per annum, and will be glad to open a matrimonial correspondence with a young lady, from twenty to twenty-six years of age, amiable, domesticated, musical, of cheerful disposition, and if possessed of a little money or an income as much the better.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED.—

T. E. H. would be happy to correspond with "M. F." with a view to marriage.

LOWLY GEORGE will be happy to enter into matrimonial relations with "Cottage Annie."

EDGAR and ALSEY beg to offer themselves as candidates for the hands and hearts of "Emmeline" and "Louise." "Edgar" is twenty-three years of age, 5 ft. 7 in. in height,

with dark brown hair, is rather good looking, and will be happy to exchange *cartes* with "Emmeline." "Albert," who merely specifies that he is 5 ft. 6 in. in height, of light complexion, a volunteer, and cashier in a ship-broker's office, wishes to correspond matrimonially with "Louise."

J. G. would be happy, with a view to matrimony, to exchange *cartes* with "Albert," on receiving assurance of respectability of position, &c.

O. H. O. will have great pleasure in exchanging *cartes* with "Ruth," or in hearing further from "Marie," with a matrimonial view.

GOOD FAIRY will be glad to enter into a preliminary correspondence with "Morning Star," and exchange *cartes*, with a view to matrimony.

TOXOPHANTES, who is twenty-four years of age, 5 ft. 6 in. in height, dark complexion, with black moustache and whiskers, is good looking, and of good temper, wishes to open a matrimonial correspondence with "Jesuit."

A. M. H., a fair and very handsome widow, twenty-eight years of age, thinks she could make the home of "C. R. A." very happy as his wife, and will be glad to open matrimonial communications with him.

H. M. in addition to the ladies named in his preceding communication, will be happy to hear also from "Annie" (No. 118) and "Ladybird" (No. 120) with a matrimonial view; should they be still disengaged.

O. N. wishes to communicate and exchange *cartes* with "Louise." Is twenty-four years of age, has black hair, a gassy moustache, is generally considered handsome, and possesses some property.

J. F. B. begs to offer himself and fortune to "Lonely Emily." Is twenty-eight years of age, tolerably good looking, partner in a lucrative iron shipbuilding firm, and in possession of 3500. a year, independent of a share in the firm, which amounts to about 8000. a year.

W. H., who is in a business realizing £300 a year, is thirty years of age, 5 ft. 8 inches in height, and of dark complexion. Will be happy to open a matrimonial communication with either "Emmeline" or "Louise."

RACHEL MORETON, who is twenty-two years of age, 5 ft. 10 in. in height, dark, and considered good looking, would be happy to exchange *cartes de visite* with "Lonely Emily," with a view to matrimony.

ALICE GRIFFITH would like to correspond matrimonially with "Veritas" (who, *pro parentibus*, she hopes is not too grave and stern). Is twenty years of age, tall, dark, and domesticated, and like himself engaged in teaching.

F. F. would be happy to exchange *cartes* and correspond matrimonially with "Veritas." Is twenty-five years of age, rather below the medium height, and thoroughly domesticated.

CORA, whom her friends term fascinating, and is a native of a southern clime, would like to win "Herbert de Wingfield." If he is not too deeply enamoured of "The Hon. Mrs. H."

INCORINTA, who is twenty-two years of age, and very domesticated, would, with a matrimonial view, have no objection to correspond and exchange *cartes* with "Horace F."

T. E. O., who is nineteen years of age, 5 ft. 6 in. in height, with fair complexion, and is of a highly respectable family, will be most happy to communicate matrimonially with "Ida M'Gregor," whose *carte* is solicited.

GEORGE R. would be glad to correspond with "M. F." with a view to matrimony. Is nineteen years of age, 5 ft. 8 in. in height, with auburn hair, blue eyes, and is passably good looking.

A. B. O., who is twenty-seven years of age, good looking, amiable, and very fond of home, will be happy to correspond matrimonially with "C. R. A." although having "no money, nor likely to have any."

BLANCHE would like to correspond matrimonially with "W. M. George," with a view to matrimony. Is of medium height, eighteen years of age, has dark brown curly hair, blue eyes, and fair complexion; is amiable, domesticated, very lady-like, and thinks she could make a home happy.

CHARLES and BOBBY wish to correspond matrimonially with "Emmeline" and "Louise." "Charles" is twenty-one years of age, 5 ft. 9 in. in height; "Robert" is twenty years of age, 5 ft. 8 in. in height; both are fair, are considered good looking, and have moderate incomes.

LEIZZIE FARLEIGH would like to hear further from "Alphonso D. D." with a view to forming a matrimonial engagement. Is twenty-seven years of age, about the medium height, well-educated, and thoroughly domesticated, in a good position society, and would make an affectionate wife. (The handwriting is good and ladylike.)

T. M. S. and J. W. T. will be happy to correspond with "Louise" and "Sofia," with a view respectively to a matrimonial engagement. "T. M. S." has an income of £250 per annum, and "J. W. T." has £200 per annum, with great expectations; both are young, and considered very good looking.

HEMIE will be most happy to correspond with "Hettie" (with whom he is prepared to exchange *cartes*) as a preliminary to marriage. Is twenty-one years of age, 5 ft. 6 in. in height, has black hair and whiskers; dark brown eyes is considered good looking, and holds a very good appointment.

TAN O'SHANTER would like very much to enter into a matrimonial correspondence with "Emmeline." Is twenty-three years of age, of middle height, dark in complexion, with whiskers and moustache, is considered really good tempered, temperate and steady, is well connected, and in a very respectable position, with excellent prospects. (Handwriting good.)

PART XXX., FOR NOVEMBER, IS NOW READY. PRICE 6d.

* * * Now Ready, VOL. V. of THE LONDON READER. Price 4s. 6d.

Also, the Title and Index to VOL. V., Price One Penny.

N.B.—CORRESPONDENTS MUST ADDRESS THEIR LETTERS TO THE EDITOR OF "THE LONDON READER."

* * * We cannot undertake to return Rejected Manuscripts. As they are sent to us voluntarily, authors should retain copies.

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